

THE LETTERS OF EMILY DICKINSON

VOLUME I

THE LETTERS OF  
*Emily Dickinson*

*Edited by*  
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*Associate Editor*  
THEODORA WARD



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### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With the publication of these letters, the task of editing the poetry and prose of Emily Dickinson, undertaken in the spring of 1950, is brought to its conclusion. The introductions and notes which follow herein extend the narrative begun in the 1955 edition of the poems, and, together with the interpretive biography issued likewise in 1955, set forth the story of Emily Dickinson's life and writing as fully as I know how to tell it.

I take pleasure in recording again the acknowledgments which I made in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. The work of preparing the poems and letters constantly overlapped, and the generosity of those who have assisted the first undertaking extends equally to this. My initial debt, most gladly owned, is to Mr. Gilbert H. Montague, whose gift to Harvard College Library provided funds for the purchase of the Dickinson manuscripts and other family papers from the late Alfred Leete Hampson, the heir to the literary estate. Mrs. Alfred Leete Hampson has always stood ready to extend help upon request and her assistance, effectively and quietly given, has been important.

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The following institutions gave willing access to their Dickinson holdings: American Antiquarian Society; Amherst College; Boston Public Library; Colby College Library; Goodell Library, University of Massachusetts; Harvard College Library; Huntington Memorial Library, Oneonta, New York; Jones Library, Amherst; The Pierpont Morgan Library; Mount Holyoke College Library; New York Public Library; Princeton University Library; The Rosenbach Foundation; Smith College Library; and Yale University Library. I wish also to thank Williston Academy for supplying the record of Austin Dickinson's enrollment, and the Baker Library of Dartmouth College for access to the Bartlett papers.

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record of the life of Emily Dickinson, has been so extensive that it virtually constitutes him a research associate.

The grant of a fellowship by the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation gave assurance that the work of editing the poems and letters of one of America's major writers would be completed.

In conclusion I take special pleasure in recognizing the interest bestowed upon this undertaking, in behalf of myself and Mrs. Ward, by Mr. William A. Jackson and the staff of the Houghton Library, where most of the work has been done. It has become an association at a personal level.

THOMAS H. JOHNSON

*Jaffrey, New Hampshire*  
*August 1957*

## INTRODUCTION

James Russell Lowell, himself a letter writer of distinction, most admired in that literary form the letters of Gray, Cowper, Walpole, and Lamb. "I hold that a letter which is not mainly about the writer of it lacks the prime flavor. The wine must smack a little of the cask," he said to his friend Charles Eliot Norton.<sup>1</sup> "Letters, so it seems to me,/ Our careless quintessence should be," he wrote. By "careless" Lowell obviously does not mean *slack* or *heedless*, or even *unpremeditated*. He has in mind what writers in the early nineteenth century meant by *genial* when they used the word in the sense of innate; and such precisely is the wine that smacks of the cask. Lowell would certainly have added Keats to his list had enough letters of Keats been published at the time for Lowell to savor them. Perhaps he would have added Emily Dickinson.

The noteworthy characteristic of the Dickinson letters, like that of the poems, is acute sensitivity. Indeed, early in the 1860's, when Emily Dickinson seems to have first gained assurance of her destiny as a poet, the letters both in style and rhythm begin to take on qualities that are so nearly the quality of her poems as on occasion to leave the reader in doubt where the letter leaves off and the poem begins. Such intensity of feeling was a handicap that she bore as one who lives with a disability, and her friends must have increased the burden by often making her aware that they felt sympathy for a pathetic situation. It left her, as those who observed her knew, though they never so phrased it, emotionally naked. In all decency, she did not dare to appear in the drawing room when guests were present. "In all the circumference of Expression," she wrote in 1884, "those guileless words of Adam and Eve never were surpassed, 'I was afraid and hid Myself.'" But the disability need not be pitied, for she knew that though she could expect no deliverance from it, she could devise compensations, and her ability to do so vests her informal correspondence

<sup>1</sup> *New Letters . . .*, ed. Howe, New York (1932) IV, 278.



with a charm which time does not alloy. "I low frugal is the Chariot/ That bears a Human soul!" The husbandry of those whose sensibilities threaten disaster must be austere. As she herself expressed the thought in 1863, renunciation is a piercing virtue.

Letter writing became a part of Emily Dickinson's life while she was still a child. Her need of contact with those she loved led her to set whole mornings or afternoons aside to pen with intimate sprightliness missives of considerable length. Such being true of her own capabilities, she expected in return, during her adolescent years, letters of equal sociability and endurance, and repeatedly bullies or cajoles those whose replies do not measure to her expectation or are delayed longer than she feels may be a reasonable period—perhaps a day or two. She was only eleven when she wrote the earliest surviving letter, in which she expresses herself with ease and charming felicity. But it is in the letter she wrote to Abiah Root in August 1845 that one sees the culmination of her development as a child. Now fourteen, she is natural, eager, interested in people, in her studies, the world about her, and in the development of her own new dimensions as a person. This realization she unconsciously discloses by saying: "I never enjoyed myself more than I have this summer."

Yet in the same year, and but a few weeks later, her next letter to Abiah reveals how her enthusiasm for school was regarded by her parents as a sign of overstimulation, for which a term of housekeeping instruction would be a salutary remedy. "Mother thinks me not able to confine myself to school this term. She had rather I would exercise. . . ." The parents had good reason to watch for signs of excitability. They had found it necessary to send her away from home for a month in the previous year after Emily had been permitted to witness for a few moments, at her own insistence, the approaching death of young Sophia Holland, a girl of her own age, and the story of that experience as Emily recounted it to Abiah in March 1846 goes far to explain the nature of the child. Emily Dickinson's quest for the unknowable began at a very early age.

The fascination of genius is in its paradox. Emily Dickinson was still a child, and on occasion of course acted childishly, but she was equipped even now with a substantial vocabulary, and had no diffi-

culty in filling what she rightly described as a "mammoth sheet" with her thoughts and feelings. Such are discernibly the lines of force which made her the woman and poet she became. She commented to Abiah in March 1847, in a context that looks back, and also forward to the Seminary she expects to enter in the fall: "I am always in love with my teachers." The expression has that quality of candor and accurate self-evaluation which gives stature to Emily Dickinson as a person and a poet. Throughout her life she turned for leadership to a "master." After 1862 Higginson stood in that relation to her, as all her letters to him make emphatically clear. It was her feeling, certainly in part, about Dr. Wadsworth, and perhaps about others now undiscoverable. But the need for a tutor or guide, who might conduct her in the manner Dante was led through the visions of a divine comedy, is the logical extension of all sentient being, and one especially needful to poets, who seek to translate mankind to greener pastures through the symbol of language. Emily Dickinson's quest for a guide she expressed with admirable forthrightness to Higginson in August 1862. Without reticence and with clear self-appraisal she said: "I had no Monarch in my life, and cannot rule myself, and when I try to organize—my little Force explodes—and leaves me bare and charred—"

The sensitivity was present from the beginning, but the poet was as yet unborn. Her susceptibility to atmosphere invigorates the letters written in the late 1840's by pointing up the contrast of those written from home and those she wrote upon arrival at South Hadley. Before she entered the Seminary she was still writing whimsically and dwelling upon recollection of past associations which she hopes a demand visit from Abiah Root or Jane Humphrey will recapture. But the simple, factual accounts she wrote of her life at Mount Holyoke tell the inevitable story of youthful maturity. The disciplines of a good institutional experience are timeless.

Homesickness increased as the year at Mount Holyoke advanced, and the strain within was one that both parents recognized, for her father decided not to send her back for a second year, or acceded to her wish to stay home. It was typical of the Dickinson family not to accept any separation, even when it was for the good of the absent member. Such a trait shows itself in the fact that when Austin went to law school he was on the end of a tether. Home affairs, the an-

nual and cherished Cattle Show for instance, took precedence over his occupations elsewhere. He could be sent for at any time. With the independence characteristic of the Dickinsons, who paid little heed to other people's rules, Austin was late in arriving at Cambridge for his law school classes; though he was graduated with his class, he did not bother to be present to receive his diploma, choosing instead to accompany his mother, evidently at her request, to a reunion at Monson Academy. "I think we miss each other more every day that we grow older," Emily wrote her brother on 8 April 1853, "for we're all unlike most everyone, and are therefore more dependent on each other for delight." During the same month she commented to him on some visiting cousins: "The Newmans seem very pleasant, but they are not *like us*. What makes a few of us so different from others? It's a question I often ask myself." It is a question to which she had unconsciously supplied the answer likewise during the same month: "I wish we were children now. I wish we were *always* children, how to grow up I don't know." These were the years when she was signing her letters "Emilie." To grow up meant to leave the clan. The tie with the Norcross cousins, even in later years, gave an outlet to that side of her nature which persisted in the game of "little girlhood." "Did you know there had been a fire here," she wrote them on July fourth, 1879, "and that but for a whim of the wind Austin and Vinnie and Emily would have all been homeless? . . . Vinnie came soft as a moccasin, 'Don't be afraid, Emily, it is only the fourth of July.' I did not tell that I saw it, for I thought if she felt it best to deceive, it must be that it was."

The sense of being closely knit reveals itself also in the Dickinson habit of lampooning neighbors. Though the quotations are Emily's words, the spirit is that of the clan. "'Mrs Skeeter' [perhaps Mrs. Luke Sweetser] is very feeble," she wrote Austin in March 1852, "'cant bear Allopathic treatment, cant have Homeopathic'—dont want Hydropathic—Oh what a pickle she is in—shouldn't think she would deign to *live*—it is so decidedly vulgar!" As she grew older, she became more expert as a satirist. "Libbie goes to Sunderland, Wednesday," she informed the Norcross cousins in October 1863, speaking of the redoubtable aunt Elizabeth, "for a minute or two; leaves here at 6 1/2—what a fitting hour—and will breakfast the night before; such a smart atmosphere! The trees stand right up straight when they

hear her boots, and will bear crockery wares instead of fruit, I fear. She hasn't starched the geraniums yet, but will have ample time, unless she leaves before April." On occasion the witticisms became sardonic, and, as her sister's are reported to have been, they are somewhat grim. In a letter written to the Norcrosses in the same month she remarks: "No one has called so far, but one old lady to look at a house. I directed her to the cemetery to spare expense of moving."

There came a time in Emily Dickinson's life, very near her thirtieth year, when she deliberately chose never willingly to leave her home again. The decision reflects itself clearly in the letters written after 1860. Before then they are enthusiastic, sometimes ardently sentimental, and usually long. Such is especially true of the letters written in the early fifties. She easily took fright about her friendships which, because of their importance to her, seemed hazardous. Her informality has charm during these years, but the protestations of affection and the repeated concern for Austin's health as well as for her own compel the reader to traverse arid stretches. The fantastic letters in the early part of 1850 lead to the speculation that this might have been the period when she commenced in earnest to write poetry. Benjamin Newton had left Amherst, but was not married. He had sent her Emerson's poems and she was writing to him. It was in 1858 that she began to assemble her poems into the small, thread-tied manuscript "volumes" or packets, and early in 1862 she felt enough assurance in her destiny to initiate her correspondence with T. W. Higginson.

During these latter years she underwent a profound emotional change, which the letters vividly reflect. Letters now became more important to her than they ever do to most people, since they were the sole means of escape from a self-elected incarceration. They enabled her to control the time and the plane of her relationships. The degree and nature of any intimacy was hers to choose. Henceforth the letters are composed with deliberation, each with the chosen recipient in mind, and it becomes clear that a letter written to Higginson, for instance, could never have been intended for Bowles or anyone else. The letters are briefer because the thought is tersely ordered. Many, if not most of them, were now written first in rough draft and then recopied. Such is especially true of those she wrote in later years, often with cordial intimacy, to correspondents like Mrs. Todd or Professor Chickering whom she never met. And after she



came to accept Higginson's verdict in 1862 that her poetry was not for publication, they served as a conveyance for her poems. They literally became her "letter to the world."

Since Emily Dickinson's full maturity as a dedicated artist occurred during the span of the Civil War, the most convulsive era of the nation's history, one of course turns to the letters of 1861-1865, and the years that follow, for her interpretation of events. But the fact is that she did not live in history and held no view of it, past or current. Walt Whitman projected himself into the world about him so intensely that not only the war but the nation itself is continuously the substance of his thought in prose and verse. The reverse was true for Dickinson, to whom the war was an annoyance, a reality only when it was mirrored to her in casualty lists. Such evidently was true in some degree for all the Dickinsons, since Austin, when drafted, exercised his privilege of paying the five-hundred-dollar fee to arrange for a substitute. Emily wrote Mrs. Bowles in the summer of 1861: "I shall have no winter this year—on account of the soldiers—Since I cannot weave Blankets, or Boots—I thought it best to omit the season." Only once again does she make any general allusion to this mighty conflict, the repercussions of which are clearly audible even after the lapse of a century. "A Soldier called—," she wrote Bowles just a year later, "a Morning ago, and asked for a Nosegay, to take to Battle. I suppose he thought we kept an Aquarium."

The attitude of mind that could prompt such shallow facetiousness can be understood in the light of her personal intent in living. Years later, on the eve of the first election of President Cleveland, she made clear to Mrs. Holland the nature and extent of her concern with social history. "Before I write to you again, we shall have had a new Czar. Is the Sister a Patriot? 'George Washington was the Father of his Country'—'George Who?' That sums all Politics to me." The rejection of society as such thus shows itself to have been total, not only physically but psychically. It was her kind of economy, a frugality she sought in order to make the most of her world; to focus, to come to grips with those universals which increasingly concerned her.

When Emily Dickinson made use of current news in her letters, and she often did so, she employed it as part of the metaphor of her speech. In thanking Theodore Holland for a sketch he sent her in the

summer of 1884, she acknowledged it with the comment: "I approve the Paint—a study of the Soudan, I take it, but the Scripture assures us our Hearts are all Dongola." She has in mind that the fate of General Gordon, whose headquarters were at Dongola in the Soudan, was in the balance, and that no man can foretell his fate. She similarly employed quotations from scripture or from Shakespeare, not as embellishment but as pointed commentary on tense situations. Taken by themselves, the words from *Coriolanus* which constitute one note to Sue in 1876 seem quite meaningless: "Doth forget that ever he heard the name of Death." But if Sue put the words in context, as she was expected to do, they constitute a tender note of apology for one whose quick tongue sometimes betrayed her stalwart heart, an apology perhaps in this case for her sister Lavinia.

It is possible in the letters to discover something about the books and authors that gave the chiefest pleasure, and something too about the way poetry is written, but on the whole the comments are desultory, often cryptic, or enthusiastic. She told Higginson in her second letter to him that among poets she admired Keats and the Brownings, among prose writers Ruskin and Sir Thomas Browne. This does not go far, and omits Shakespeare, her truest master. She singles out the book of Revelation in the Bible, yet it is but one of many books from that great repository which was her constant source of inspiration, allusion, and quotation. Whitman, an innovator of the first order himself, she told Higginson that she had read nothing of, and the statement may have remained true throughout her life. In the early years, Emerson, the Brontës, and Dickens were favorites; later she avidly awaited the appearance of a new novel by George Eliot, but she evinced no marked interest in her other contemporaries. The striking originality, and on occasion profundity, of her own verse never reveals itself in the few critical assessments scattered through her letters.

It is for a quite different reason that the letters attain stature. They are the expression of her unique personality, and of a mind which could phrase the thought, "There is always one thing to be grateful for,—that one is one's self and not somebody else." Though she never wrote about herself after adolescence, the letters nevertheless are always self-portraits, written by one who has observed herself frankly and with no self-pity or regrets. Such indeed remains true whether the letter is penned to a child or an adult, to an intimate

or a casual acquaintance. They validate another statement that, like the above, she made to Higginson, one which expresses the deliberateness with which she chose her way of living. When he asked her whether, not even seeing visitors, she felt sorry not to have something to do, she answered: "I never thought of conceiving that I could ever have the slightest approach to such a want in all future time." She paused and added: "I feel that I have not expressed myself strongly enough."

## NOTES ON THE PRESENT TEXT

With the exception of letters presumably destroyed, all those which at the present time Emily Dickinson is known to have written are here assembled. The method of arrangement used in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1955), the companion edition to these volumes of *Letters*, has been followed here. As far as possible the letters are placed chronologically, each is numbered and is directly followed by data concerning manuscript location and publication history. The explanatory notes for each letter briefly identify persons and events mentioned. (Recipients of letters and persons frequently named are more fully identified in the biographical sketches in Appendix 1.) The source of literary allusions and quotations is given wherever it is known.

Since Emily Dickinson rarely dated her letters after 1850, except by an occasional "Wednesday" or "Saturday," the dates that she gave are moved to the notes unless the day named is part of the significance of the communication (for example, letter no. 777). Frequently internal evidence sets the date precisely. Often the date can be limited to a given week or month. But sometimes an assigned date must derive solely from the evidence of handwriting, and such letters are therefore spoken of as having been written "about" a probable year. A detailed study of the "Characteristics of the Handwriting," written by Mrs. Ward, is set forth in the introduction to *Poems* (1955), xlix-lix, illustrated by twenty facsimile reproductions of the handwriting as it revealed itself over the years. In instances where an autograph is missing, the text derives from the earliest published source, unless the note specifies otherwise.

One feels virtually certain that more Dickinson letters will eventually come to light, though painstaking search over a period of several years has not turned them up. Even so, there is little reason to expect that the number of undiscovered letters is large. Many letters are known to be irrecoverable, and among them some that would be

especially interesting. Such are the early letters written to Benjamin F. Newton, to George H. Gould, and to William H. Dickinson, letters which Mrs. Todd could not trace when she was preparing her edition of *Letters of Emily Dickinson*, published in 1894.<sup>2</sup> There were the letters to the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, almost certainly destroyed, and to others, whose names may not be known at present. Some now lost Mrs. Todd secured, at least from transcripts, during the 1890's. The Norcross cousins, for instance, never showed Mrs. Todd the large number they had received over the years, but supplied copies of such extracts as they thought appropriate; all were destroyed at the time of Louise Norcross's death in 1919. The present text of all such letters derives either from *Letters of Emily Dickinson* (ed. 1931) or from the Norcross transcripts themselves.<sup>3</sup>

The question of whether to publish letters written to Emily Dickinson never rose, because only a handful of such letters survived. After Emily's death, Lavinia Dickinson destroyed almost all of them. A few written by Helen Hunt Jackson, by the editor Thomas Niles, and by Thomas Wentworth Higginson were saved, or escaped destruction. Because all were written by persons important to American letters in the nineteenth century, and clarify points in several Dickinson letters, they are here included.

In round figures, some 1150 letters and prose fragments are included, and the texts of three-quarters of the number derives from Dickinson autographs. The remainder perforce reproduces the text of transcripts or of an earlier publication. About one hundred letters are published for the first time, including almost all of the letters to Jane Humphrey, and to Mrs. J. Howard Sweetser. This figure does not include those which derive from transcripts made by the recipient, such as those written to Catherine Scott Anthon and to Susan Dickinson. Actually the new material is much more extensive than a

<sup>2</sup> See *Ancestors' Brocades: The Literary Debut of Emily Dickinson*, by Millicent Todd Bingham, New York, 1945, pages 254 and 263. Mabel Loomis Todd fortuitously set herself the task of collecting the letters within the decade following the death of Emily Dickinson. Many that survive today might well have been destroyed had she less systematically undertaken her labors. The story is told in detail by her daughter in *Ancestors' Brocades*, especially in the chapters "Collecting the Letters" (188-209), and "Emily's Correspondents" (247-266).

<sup>3</sup> The spelling of Louise's nickname is here given as *Loo* (not *Lou*), since that is the spelling Emily Dickinson always used.

tabulation would show, for a very large number of letters were subject to extensive deletion when they were previously published.<sup>4</sup>

All autograph letters are presented in their verbatim form.

It is to be expected that autographs privately owned will change hands. Ownership is here ascribed as it was last known.

Names of recipients are given and indexed as Emily Dickinson knew them when she was writing to them. Abiah Root and Jane Humphrey, for instance, were married after the correspondence with them had come to an end. All letters were written in Amherst except those for which the headings specify a different location.

#### SYMBOLS USED TO IDENTIFY MANUSCRIPTS

At the present time Dickinson autograph letters are located in about fourteen institutions. Some two score individuals are known to possess one autograph or more. Individuals are named in the list of acknowledgments and identified by last name in the notes of the

<sup>4</sup> The present editing of the letters to Abiah Root requires a special note. During the early 1890's Abiah Root Strong loaned almost all the letters that she had received from Emily Dickinson to Mrs. Todd, who made complete transcripts and then returned them to Mrs. Strong. When Mrs. Todd published *Letters* (1894), she omitted large portions from the letters to Abiah Root, in part at the request of the recipient, in part because some sections dwelt at length on schoolgirl news.

Evidently Mrs. Todd made printer's copy by clipping out portions from the transcripts she had made, supplying the printer with the remainder. When she prepared the second edition (1931), she restored some of the omitted portions. Among her papers in the Bingham collection (AC) is an envelope filled with the portions still unused.

This edition reproduces the 1931 edition of the text of those letters to Abiah Root for which no autograph is known. It does not incorporate the text of the remaining clippings into the body of the letters, because the position cannot be exactly determined, and because the association of a clipping with a given letter is at best conjecture. Most of her omissions Mrs. Todd noted with dots, but not all, and not always at the right place. They therefore are placed separately, and at the end of letters no. 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 39, 69, and 91. Of the two remaining letters to Abiah Root for which no autographs are known, no. 15 appears to be complete as published in 1931, and no. 23 may be complete with the additional paragraph which now follows it.

Since Mrs. Strong could not recall the names of many of her schoolmates, when she discussed the letters with Mrs. Todd (see AB 188-189, 206-209), it is impossible to be sure of identification now. For instance, Sarah Gray, Sarah Taylor, and Sarah S. T. may all have been the same Sarah — namely, Sarah Tracy. Blank spaces indicate words which Mrs. Todd could not decipher, and therefore left blank.

text. Institutions likewise are named in full in the list and briefly identified in the notes. Certain symbols are used throughout.

AAS—The American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

AC—Amherst College Library. All autograph letters, and transcripts of autograph letters, at Amherst College are in the Millicent Todd Bingham Collection, except letters to the following persons, presented by other donors: Mrs. James S. Cooper, Mr. Kendall Emerson, Mrs. Richard H. Mather, Mrs. William Henry Prince, and Mrs. Edward Tuckerman.

BPL Higg—The Thomas Wentworth Higginson papers in the Galatea Collection, Boston Public Library.

HCL—Harvard College Library. HCL ARS (letters to Abiah Root Strong); HCL B (manuscripts which had special association for Martha Dickinson Bianchi); HCL E (letters to Henry Vaughan Emmons); HCL G (letters to John L. Graves); HCL H (letters to Dr. and Mrs. Josiah Gilbert Holland); HCL JH (letters to Jane Humphrey); HCL L (letters formerly in the possession of Lavinia Norcross Dickinson or Susan Gilbert Dickinson or their heirs)

NYPL—New York Public Library.

YUL—Yale University Library.

#### SYMBOLS USED TO IDENTIFY PUBLICATION

AB *Ancestors' Brocades: The Literary Début of Emily Dickinson*. By Millicent Todd Bingham. New York: Harper, 1945.

AM *The Atlantic Monthly* (1875—current).

FF *Emily Dickinson Face to Face: Unpublished Letters with Notes and Reminiscences*. By Martha Dickinson Bianchi. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932.

FN *Emily Dickinson: Friend and Neighbor*. By MacGregor Jenkins. Boston: Little, Brown, 1930.

Home *Emily Dickinson's Home: Letters of Edward Dickinson and His Family, with documentation and comment*. Edited by Millicent Todd Bingham. New York: Harper, 1955.

L (1894) *Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd. 2 vols. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1894.

L (1931) *Letters of Emily Dickinson*. New and enlarged edition. Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd. New York: Harper, 1931.

LH *Emily Dickinson's Letters to Dr. and Mrs. Josiah Gilbert Holland*. Edited by Theodora Van Wagenen Ward. Cambridge: Harvard, 1951.

LL *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson*. By Martha Dickinson Bianchi. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924.

NEQ *The New England Quarterly* (1927—current).

Poems (1955) *The Poems of Emily Dickinson, Including variant readings critically compared with all known manuscripts*. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson. 3 vols. Cambridge: Harvard, 1955.

Revelation *Emily Dickinson: A Revelation*. Edited by Millicent Todd Bingham. New York: Harper, 1954.



I

LETTERS

1-14

[ 1842-1846 ]

“. . . *the Hens*

*lay finely . . .*”

[1842-1846]

Emily Dickinson's twelfth year brought the first interruption to the close companionship in her home, when Austin was sent away to school for a single term. His father's first letter to him said: "I sent you there to improve," and one infers that family and neighbor associations were becoming distractions not good for his studies.

The record of enrollments at Amherst Academy in the forties gives a bewildering impression of casualness in the matter of school attendance, and may reflect a similar condition elsewhere. Emily herself was in and out of school, for reasons of health, several times during her adolescent years. Some of her friends were girls sent to Amherst from other towns, to live with relatives or board in the homes of school-mates while in residence for a term or two. Only one among the group of five who were her special friends during these years was Amherst bred.

The letters of this earliest surviving group were written to her brother and to two school friends. Her mind was developing rapidly, but she was still in the immediate world of childhood when she wrote the three letters of 1842 with which the series begins.

I

To Austin Dickinson

18 April 1842

My dear Brother

As Father was going to Northampton and thought of coming over to see you I thought I would improve the opportunity and write you a few lines—We miss you very much indeed you cannot think how odd it seems without you there was always such a Hurrah wherever you was I miss My bedfellow very much for it is rare that I can get any now for Aunt Elisabeth is afraid to sleep alone and Vinnie has to sleep with her but I have the privilege of looking under the bed every night which I improve as you may suppose the Hens get along nicely the chickens grow very fast I am afraid they will be so large that you cannot perceive them with the naked Eye when you get home the yellow hen is coming off with a brood of chickens we found a hens nest with four Eggs in it I took out three and brought them in the next day I went to see if there had been any laid and there had not been any laid and the one that was there had gone so I suppose a skonk had been there or else a hen In the shape of a skonk and I dont know which—the Hens lay finely William gets two a day at his house we 5 or 6 a day here there Is one Creeper that lays on the ground the nests are so high that they cannot reach them from the ground I Expect we shall have to make some ladders for them to get up on William found the hen and Rooster after you went away that you could not find we received your letter Friday morning and very glad we were to get it you must write oftener to us the temperance dinner went off very well the other day all the Folks Except Lavinia and I there were over a Hundred there the students thought the dinner too cheap the tickets were a half a dollar a piece and so they are going to have a supper tomorrow Evening which I suppose will be very genteel Mr Jones has found in looking at his policy that his insurance is 8 thousand dollars instead of 6 which makes him feel a great deal better than he did at first Mr Wilson and his wife took tea here the other night they are going to move wednesday—they have made out to get one of

[ 3 ]



the Mt Pleasant Buildings to its place of destination which is a matter of great rejoicing to the public it was really was Enough to make ones Eyes ache and I am glad it has got out of sight and hearing too—there are going to be great fixing up I expect in those buildings we are all very well and hope you are the same—we have very pleasant weather now Mr Whipple has come and we expect Miss Humphrey tomorrow—Aunt Montague—has been saying you would cry before the week was out Cousin Zebina had a fit the other day and bit his tongue into—as you say it is a rainy day and I can think of—Nothing more to say—I shall Expect an answer to my letter soon Charles Richardson has got back and is in Mr Pitkins store Sabra is not running after him at all she had not seen him when I last saw her which was Saturday I suppose she would send her *respects to you* if *she knew I was going to write to you—I must now close*—all send a great deal of love to you and hope you are getting along well and—Enjoy your self—

Your affectionate Sister Emily—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 53). Ink. Unpublished. Addressed on the fold: Wm Austin Dickinson/Easthampton/Mass. On the date line she wrote "Amherst," and her aunt Elizabeth Dickinson added: "Mass. April 18th 1842."

A few days before his thirteenth birthday, Austin was sent to Williston Seminary, newly opened as an endowed institution at Easthampton, to attend the spring term. His father wrote to him a few days after his enrollment, and followed his letter with a visit, carrying Emily's letter with him. Sabra was the daughter of A. P. Howe, landlord of the Amherst House.

2

To Austin Dickinson

1 May 1842

My dear Brother

As it was Sunday Afternoon and all the folks gone to meeting Except—mother and myself I thought I would improve the opportunity and write you a few lines—we are all very well—but very lonely without you—I am glad you took the Latin lexicon—if it can be of any use to [you] because I have had good luck in borrowing one—your Clothes came—safe by Mr Pr[?]er and we were very glad to hear that

[ 4 ]

you were well and in good spirits—the hens get along nicely—we brought in 9 Eggs yesterday—We generally get about 7 a day Mrs—Washburn was very much pleased with the Eggs mother sent her—the other day Francis brought your Rooster home and the other 2 went to fighting him while I was gone to School—mother happened to look out of the window and she saw him laying on the ground—he was most dead—but she and Aunt Elisabeth went right out and took him up and put him in a Coop and he is nearly well now—while he is shut up the other Roosters—will come around and insult him in Every possible way by Crowing right in his Ears—and then they will jump up on the Coop and Crow there as if they—wanted to show that he was Completely in their power and they could treat him as they chose—Aunt Elisabeth said she wished their throats would split and then they could insult him no longer—I had an opportunity to write to Jane Humphrey which I improved and wrote her a short note as I had not time to write a long one the Man who was going to carry them having but a short time to stay in Amherst—I can think of nothing more to say but that we shall all be glad when you come home again—a great deal of love from all to you if you could I wish you—would send Sabra a paper she would be so pleased with it—I want you to answer this letter as soon as you can—Our garden is not made yet—our trees are all very full of blossoms now and—they look Very handsome—your Clothes that you sent home are all in good order—for you to put on—John Wheelock has been very sick and still continues to be so—though he is not as bad now as he was I do not think—Pa says he saw Mr Armsby here to Meeting to day—I like Miss Humphrey very much as a teacher—I recite to her in all My Studies Except Latin—the Horse is not very well and is staying at Mr Frinks to be taken care of till he is better I can think of nothing more to say now—

Your affectionate Sister Emily

ps—we expect Grandpa Norcross and Uncle William up here this week—Sabra Howe has had a handsome present of a gold ring from Charles Richardson She dont seem to care much about him but he hangs on to her—and will not let go his hold—in hopes I suppose she will come back to him which she does not seem inclined to do I will put in her respects because I know she would send them if she knew I was agoing to write—

[ 5 ]

My dear Austin.

I have yielded to Emily's solicitations to write you a few words. I am not in the habit of writing to gentlemen more than *once* if I do not receive an answer, however I will not *censure* you, for not writing me—I know you are busy as examination is so near—hope to see you next week Wednesday—I do not know of any news to tell you—except that three of your hens strayed away to Major Kellogg's—and were brought home by Henry Howe to-day,—after an absence of several days. Eggs are very abundant—11 were brought in to-day. The lattice-work & grape-arbor have been painted to-day—Mr Howe is having his house painted—Col Smith's house is just finished—this street is fast improving—come home as soon as you can for we are lonesome. Accept much love from your

affectionate aunt,  
Elizabeth

excuse all haste for it is late—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 54). Ink. Unpublished. Dated: Amherst May 1 1842. Addressed on the fold: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson/Easthampton/Mass.

"Aunt Elizabeth," then a girl of nineteen living in her older brother's home, added a note on the same sheet on Monday, while the letter was still waiting for a bearer. Her note is dated: Amherst, Mass. May 2nd 1842.

3

To Jane Humphrey

12 May 1842

My dear Jane

I have been looking for a letter from you this long time but not receiving any I plucked up all the remaining courage that I had left and determined to make one more effort to write you a few lines—I want to see you very much for I have got a great deal to tell you about school matters—and besides you are one of my dear friends. Sabra has had a beautiful ring given to her by Charles you know who as well as I do—the Examination at Easthampton is today—and Austin is coming home tonight. Father is sick with the Rheumatism and can

[ 6 ]

not go but Mother has gone with somebody else—it is very unpleasant today—it showers most all the time—your sister is very well indeed—I believe she has gone to South Hadley this afternoon—I miss you more and more every day, in my study in play at home indeed every where I miss my beloved Jane—I wish you would write to me—I should think more of it than of a mine of gold—when you write me I wish you would write me a great long letter and tell me all the news that you know of—all your friends send a great deal of love to you Austin and William Washburn send their respects to you—this Afternoon is Wednesday and so of course there was Speaking and Composition—there was one young man who read a Composition the Subject was think twice before you speak—he was describing the reasons why any one should do so—one was—if a young gentleman—offered a young lady his arm and he had a dog who had no tail and he boarded at the tavern think twice before you speak. Another is if a young gentleman knows a young lady who he thinks nature has formed to perfection let him remember that roses conceal thorns he is the silliest creature that ever lived I think. I told him that I thought he had better think twice before he spoke—what good times we used to have jumping into bed when you slept with me. I do wish you would come to Amherst and make me a great long visit—how do you get along in Latin. I am in the class that you used to be in in Latin—besides Latin I study History and Botany I like the school very much indeed—your Sister sends a great deal of love to all your folks and to every one she knows there—My Plants grow beautifully—you know that elegant old Rooster that Austin thought so much of—the others fight him and killed him—answer this letter as soon as you can—I can think of nothing more to say now yours affectionately

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: Rosenbach 1170/17 (1). Ink. Dated: Amherst May 12 1842. Addressed on the fold: Miss Jane Humphrey/Southwick/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms May 12. Written in pencil, in a different hand, is the draft of the beginning of a letter—possibly Jane's reply: "My very dear Friend/I Know you are thinking of m[e] (if thinking of me at all) as a very neg[ligent] . . ."

PUBLICATION: George Frisbie Whicher, *This Was a Poet* (1938) 43–44, in part.

Jane Humphrey had lived with the Dickinsons while she briefly at-

[ 7 ]

tended Amherst Academy. Sabra Howe, William Washburn, and Charles Richardson were school friends. Jane's sister Helen Humphrey, was one of ED's teachers, and another sister, Mary, was a student at the Academy.

4

To Austin Dickinson

autumn 1844

Dear brother Austin

As Mr Baker was going directly to where you are I thought I would write a line to inform you that if it is pleasant day after tomorrow we are all coming over to see you, but you must not think too much of our coming as it may rain and spoil all our plans. however if it is not pleasant so that we do not come over father says that you may come home on Saturday, and if we do not come he will make some arrangement for you to come and write you about it.

I attend singing school. Mr Woodman has a very fine one Sunday evenings and has quite a large school. I presume you will want to go when you return home. We had a very severe frost here last night and the ground was frozen—hard. We all had our noses nipped a little. the Ladys Society meets at our house tomorrow and I expect we shall have a very pleasant meeting. If you was at home it would be perfectly sure. We wish much to hear from you, and if you have time I wish you would write a line and send by Mr Baker. Mother wishes if your stockings are any of them thin, that you should do them up in a little bundle & send them by Mr Baker. Accept much love from us all.

Your affectionate sister E

If we dont come Wednesday we may Thursday if not father will write you.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Monday. A.M. Addressed on the fold: William A. Dickinson, per Mr Baker.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 66-67.

Austin was a student in the Classical Department of Williston Seminary for the term ending 10 August 1842, and for the year 1844-1845. This letter was probably written in the autumn of 1844, when the early appearance of frozen ground would draw comment. Mrs. Bingham's speculation seems reasonable: "Mr. Baker, the bearer of the note, may have been the

[ 8 ]

prosperous farmer Alfred Baker, or his brother Osmyn, a well-known lawyer who moved his office from Amherst to Northampton in 1844" (*Home* 66).

5

To Abiah Root

23 February 1845

Dear Abiah,

After receiving the smittings of conscience for a long time, I have at length succeeded in stifling the voice of that faithful monitor by a promise of a long letter to you; so leave everything and sit down prepared for a long siege in the shape of a bundle of nonsense from friend E.

. . . I keep your lock of hair as precious as gold and a great deal more so. I often look at it when I go to my little lot of treasures, and wish the owner of that glossy lock were here. Old Time wags on pretty much as usual at Amherst, and I know of nothing that has occurred to break the silence; however, the reduction of the postage has excited my risibles somewhat. Only think! We can send a letter before long for five little coppers only, filled with the thoughts and advice of dear friends. But I will not get into a philosophizing strain just yet. There is time enough for that upon another page of this mammoth sheet. . . . Your *beau idéal* D. I have not seen lately. I presume he was changed into a star some night while gazing at them, and placed in the constellation Orion between Bellatrix and Betelgeux. I doubt not if he was here he would wish to be kindly remembered to you. What delightful weather we have had for a week! It seems more like smiling May crowned with flowers than cold, arctic February wading through snowdrifts. I have heard some sweet little birds sing, but I fear we shall have more cold weather and their little bills will be frozen up before their songs are finished. My plants look beautifully. Old King Frost has not had the pleasure of snatching any of them in his cold embrace as yet, and I hope will not. Our little pussy has made out to live. I believe you know what a fatality attends our little kitties, all of them, having had six die one right after the other. Do you love your little niece J. as well as ever? Your soliloquy on the year that is past and gone was not unheeded by me. Would that we might spend the year which is now fleeting so swiftly by to better advantage than the one which we have not the power to recall! Now

[ 9 ]



I know you will laugh, and say I wonder what makes Emily so sentimental. But I don't care if you do, for I sha'n't hear you. What are you doing this winter? I am about everything. I am now working a pair of slippers to adorn my father's feet. I wish you would come and help me finish them. . . . Although it is late in the day, I am going to wish you a happy New Year, — not but what I think your New Year will pass just as happily without it, but to make a little return for your kind wish, which so far in a good many respects has been granted, probably because you wished that it might be so. I am trying to think of some news to inform you of and while I write the fire burns which is a very natural inference as it is a chilly, uncomfortable day. I go to singing-school Sabbath evenings to improve my voice. . . . Don't you envy me? . . .

I do wish you would come, 'Biah, and make me a long visit. If you will, I will entertain you to the best of my abilities, which you know are neither few nor small. Why can't you persuade your father and mother to let you come here to school next term, and keep me company, as I am going? Miss —, I presume you can guess who I mean, is going to finish her education next summer. The finishing stroke is to be put on at [Norton]. She will then have learned all that we poor foot-travellers are toiling up the hill of knowledge to acquire. Wonderful thought! Her horse has carried her along so swiftly that she has nearly gained the summit, and we are plodding along on foot after her. Well said and sufficient this. We'll finish an education sometime, won't we? You may then be Plato, and I will be Socrates, provided you won't be wiser than I am. Lavinia just now interrupted my flow of thought by saying give my love to A. I presume you will be glad to have some one break off this epistle. All the girls send much love to you. And please accept a large share for yourself.

From your beloved  
Emily E. Dickinson.

I received your note by Sabra for which you have my hearty thanks. I intended to write you by Sabra, but as usual she went off in a hurry and I had no time, and I thought as all the other girls wrote you, my letter if I wrote one, would seem no smarter than any body else, and you know how I hate to be common. There, haven't I made a fine lot of excuses for not writing you. I also received your paper last week

Friday. How exceedingly witty it was. The one about the little boy who was fearful of [ ] out before he went to [ ] was so sharp I was afraid of cutting off some of my fingers. Don't think of the Bookmark dear A [ ]

I presume by this time you are thirsting for some news from friends S. G., A. W., H. M. and S. P. They are all well and happy for aught I know. Sarah [Tracy?] alias Virgil is as consistent and calm and lovely as ever. Abby goes to school and is storing her mind with knowledge as the bee sips the nectar from the flowers. Hatty is making fun as usual, and Sabra [ ]. Sarah S. groweth up like the green [ ] the [ ]. Mr. [ ]

Sabra Howe has gone to Baltimore to stay several months or a year. Anna Taylor is [ ] on the single [ ]. Jane Gridley struts as badly as ever.

Have you heard anything from S[ ] Newton. I had a paper from her a few days ago. She was well and sent much love to all her friends. I suppose you consider yourself one and as such will take some of this article to yourself. Don't you wish Jane Kim[ ] would come back. I can't bear to think she is so far away. I have sent her a letter and a catalogue since she went away, and I don't know whether she ever received them or not as I [ ] of her friends have heard from her except to know that she reached there in safety and was very well. \*I go to singing-school Sabbath evenings to improve my voice as a matter of [ ], & have the pleasure of a glimpse at nearly all the [ ] and [ ] in the town. I have seen nothing of Jane Brigham since last term. I presume she is at her old lodgings in Prescott. Mary Snell has a little sister which they think of calling Ellena (?) Is n't it a beautiful name?

\*I hope this letter won't be broken open. \*If it is folks will wonder who has got so much nonsense to tell, won't they?

Do write soon and a huge letter too may it be, much more so than mine. I hope the little dove will bear the letter safely. [*drawing of a hand*] Don't laugh at that clumsy hand. Give my love to all inquiring friends. I have so many in S[pringfield] I fear you will be troubled to give them all the particulars respecting my health. You know I always mean what I say.

\* Please send me a copy of that Romance you was writing at Amherst. \*I am in a fever to read it. \*I expect it will be against my Whig feelings.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. See note 3 in "Notes on the Present Text." All of the letter above the signature has been published. All the rest is unpublished except the sentences marked by asterisks; these have been published in whole or in part in *Letters* (1931). The letter concludes with brief messages written as postscripts by other friends at ED's invitation, and signed: "Harriette Merrill," "Sarah S. T.," "Anna N. Tyler," and "Not Emily."

The section in the second paragraph above the signature, beginning "Although it is late," concludes with the statement that the day is chilly and uncomfortable. Earlier in the same paragraph, and separated by dots to indicate omitted material, is the sentence "It seems more like smiling May . . . than cold, arctic February." Both sections were first added in the 1931 edition, and the latter section may belong in another letter, or certainly in a different part of this one if the letter, begun one day, was finished on another.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 2-4, in small part; *LL* 109-110, in small part; *L* (1931) 1-4, all that precedes the signature. It is dated (presumably by ED): Amherst, Feb. 23, 1845.

Attending the same school continuously seems not to have been expected, and by the time ED was fourteen she had made another friend who had come to Amherst and had gone again. After Abiah Root's terms at the Academy were over, ED saw her only when she came to Amherst to visit her cousins the Palmers. The friendship lasted for ten years, but no letter exchange is known to have taken place after Abiah's marriage in 1854 (see letter no. 166).

6

To Abiah Root

7 May 1845

Dear Abiah,

It seems almost an age since I have seen you, and it is indeed an age for friends to be separated. I was delighted to receive a paper from you, and I also was much pleased with the news it contained, especially that you are taking lessons on the "piny," as you always call it. But remember not to get on ahead of me. Father intends to have a piano very soon. How happy I shall be when I have one of

my own! Old Father Time has wrought many changes here since your last short visit. Miss S. T. and Miss N. M. have both taken the marriage vows upon themselves. Dr. Hitchcock has moved into his new house, and Mr. Tyler across the way from our house has moved into President Hitchcock's old house. Mr. C. is going to move into Mr. T.'s former house, but the worst thing old Time has done here is he has walked so fast as to overtake Harriet Merrill and carry her to Hartford on last week Saturday. I was so vexed with him for it that I ran after him and made out to get near enough to him to put some salt on his tail, when he fled and left me to run home alone. . . . Viny went to Boston this morning with father, to be gone a fortnight, and I am left alone in all my glory. I suppose she has got there before this time, and is probably staring with mouth and eyes wide open at the wonders of the city. I have been to walk to-night, and got some very choice wild flowers. I wish you had some of them. Viny and I both go to school this term. We have a very fine school. There are 63 scholars. I have four studies. They are Mental Philosophy, Geology, Latin, and Botany. How large they sound, don't they? I don't believe you have such big studies. . . . My plants look finely now. I am going to send you a little geranium leaf in this letter, which you must press for me. Have you made you an herbarium yet? I hope you will if you have not, it would be such a treasure to you; 'most all the girls are making one. If you do, perhaps I can make some additions to it from flowers growing around here. How do you enjoy your school this term? Are the teachers as pleasant as our old school-teachers? I expect you have a great many prim, starched up young ladies there, who, I doubt not, are perfect models of propriety and good behavior. If they are, don't let your free spirit be chained by them. I don't know as there [are] any in school of this stamp. But there 'most always are a few, whom the teachers look up to and regard as their satellites. I am growing handsome very fast indeed! I expect I shall be the belle of Amherst when I reach my 17th year. I don't doubt that I shall have perfect crowds of admirers at that age. Then how I shall delight to make them await my bidding, and with what delight shall I witness their suspense while I make my final decision. But away with my nonsense. I have written one composition this term, and I need not assure you it was exceedingly edifying to myself as well as everybody else. Don't you want to see it? I really wish you



could have a chance. We are obliged to write compositions once in a fortnight, and select a piece to read from some interesting book the week that we don't write compositions.

We really have some most charming young women in school this term. I sha'n't call them anything but women, for women they are in every sense of the word. I must, however, describe one, and while I describe her I wish Imagination, who is ever present with you, to make a little picture of this self-same young lady in your mind, and by her aid see if you cannot conceive how she looks. Well, to begin. . . . Then just imagine her as she is, and a huge string of gold beads encircling her neck, and don't she present a lively picture; and then she is so bustling, she is always whizzing about, and whenever I come in contact with her I really think I am in a hornet's nest. I can't help thinking every time I see this singular piece of humanity of Shakespeare's description of a tempest in a teapot. But I must not laugh at her, for I verily believe she has a good heart, and that is the principal thing now-a-days. Don't you hope I shall become wiser in the company of such virtuosos? It would certainly be desirable. Have you noticed how beautifully the trees look now? They seem to be completely covered with fragrant blossoms. . . . I had so many things to do for Viny, as she was going away, that very much against my wishes I deferred writing you until now, but forgive and forget, dear A., and I will promise to do better in future. Do write me soon, and let it be a long, long letter; and when you can't get time to write, send a paper, so as to let me know you think of me still, though we are separated by hill and stream. All the girls send much love to you. Don't forget to let me receive a letter from you soon. I can say no more now as my paper is all filled up.

Your affectionate friend,  
Emily E. Dickinson.

Abby Wood & I sit together, and have real nice times. There is just room enough at our table for you and Hatty Merrill. How I wish you were both here this moment. I had a newspaper as large as life from Miss Adams our dear teacher. She sent me a beautiful little bunch of pressed flowers which I value very much as they were from her. How happy we all were together that term we went to Miss Adams. I wish it might be so again, but I never expect it. I have had two letters from S since her mother died. She is keeping house now. She

says they have a good girl & get along very well, though she misses her mother very much. I pity her very much she must be so lonely without her mother. I don't know of any news in particular to tell you, except that Emeline Kellogg is preparing to go away to school. Jane Gridley, Miss Gridley I should have said, has gone to Norton to school. Martha Gilbert still lives and moves and has her being pretty much as ever.

Sarah and Abby both send their best love to you, also Sabra. Sarah wishes you to write to her soon without waiting to hear from her first, and Abby wishes the same. You must excuse me, Biah, for not writing this letter in order to have reached you on last Wednesday, but . . .

MANUSCRIPT: missing. See note 3 in "Notes on the Present Text." All of the letter above the signature has been previously published.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 5-8; LL 110-113; L (1931) 4-6; dated (presumably by ED): Amherst, May 7, 1845.

When ED was visiting her uncle William Dickinson in Worcester, in 1844, her father wrote her on 4 June: "Tell Uncle Wm. that I want a Piano when he can buy good ones, at a fair price." (HCL). It was nearly a year later that the intent was realized (see letter no. 7). In recommending to Abiah that she make an herbarium, ED does not say whether she had started her own. She was studying botany at the time, and perhaps this letter marks the beginning of her collection of pressed plants, still extant (HCL), which she assembled with meticulous care. The allusion here to Shakespeare is the first of many which appear in her letters. One conjectures that it might be to the situation described by Puck in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (III, ii) which he sums up by the words: "Lord, what fools these mortals be!"

To Abiah Root

3 August 1845

Dear Abiah

I have now sit down to write you a long, long, letter. My writing apparatus is upon a stand before me, and all things are ready. I have no flowers before me as you had to inspire you. But then you know I can imagine myself inspired by them and perhaps that will do as well. You cannot imagine how delighted I was to receive your letter.

It was so full — & everything in it was interesting to me because it came from you. I presume you did not doubt my gratitude for it, on account of my delaying so long to answer it for you know I have had no leisure for anything. When I tell you that our term has been 16 weeks long & that I have had 4 studys & taken Music lessons you can imagine a little how my time has been taken up lately. I will try to be more punctual in such matters for the future. How are you now. I am very sorry to hear that you are unable to remain in your school on account of your health, it must be such a disappointment to you. But I presume you are enjoying yourself much to be at home again. You asked me in your last letter if Old Father Time wagged on in Amherst pretty much as ever. For my part I see no particular change in his movements unless it be that he goes on a swifter pace than formerly, and that he wields his sickle more stern than ever. How do you like taking music lessons. I presume you are delighted with it. I am taking lessons this term, of Aunt Selby who is spending the summer with us. I never enjoyed myself more than I have this summer. For we have had such a delightful school and such pleasant tea[c]hers, and besides I have had a piano of my own. Our Examination is to come off next week on Monday. I wish you could be here at that time. Why cant you come. If you will — You can come and practice on my piano as much as you wish to. I am already gasping in view of our examination, and although I am determined not to dread it I know it is so foolish. Yet in spite of my heroic resolutions, I cannot avoid a few misgivings when I think of those tall, stern, trustees, and when I know that I shall lose my character if I dont recite as precise as the laws of the Medes and Persians. But what matter will that be a hundred years hence. I will distress you no longer with my fears, for you know well enough what they are without my entering into any explanations. Are you practising now you are at home — I hope you are, for if you are not you would be likely to forget what you have learnt. I want very much to hear you play. I have the same Instruction book that you have, Bertini, and I am getting along in it very well. Aunt Selby says she shant let me have many tunes now for she wants I should get over in the book a good ways first. Oh Abiah. If Sarah [Tracy?], Hatty, and yourself were only here this summer what times we should have. I wish if we cant be together all the time that we could meet once in a while at least. I wish you would all come to

our house and then Abby come too and such times as we should have would be a caution. I want to see you all so much, that it seems as if I could not wait. Have you heard anything from Miss Adams Our dear teacher — I have not — I sent her a paper about 3 weeks ago — but I have received no answer, and therefore I do not know where she is now. How much I would give to see her once more — but I am afraid I never shall. She is so far away — You asked me in your letter to tell you all the news worth telling and though there is not much yet I will endeavor to think of everything that will be news to you. In the first place, Mrs Jones and Mrs S Mack have both of them a little *laughter*. Very promising *Children* I understand. I dont doubt if they live they will be ornaments to society. I think they are both to be considered as Embryos of future usefulness Mrs. Washburn. Mack has now two grand daughters. Isnt she to be envied. Sabra Howe and J Gridley have both returned home. I do not see as they have altered much. They have both been attending school, and have now come to honor us poor Country folks with their presence a little while. Dont you think we ought to feel highly honored by such condescension. Jane will not return to Norton again. But Sabra will go back to Baltimore in the course of a few weeks probably to spend some time — Emeline Kellogg is expected home from school in a short time. Martha Gilbert looks and appears just as she ever did. Your Protege, Nancy Cutler is well and attending school, and Abby and I are plodding over our books pretty much as ever. Have you heard from — Hatty or Sarah — lately. I have received one paper from Sarah and a note from Hatty since I last wrote you. They were both well and happy. I do not understand your hints in regard to Abby taking so much interest in Deacon Macks family. Now Sarah is absent, I take it William is the member of the family whom you allude to. But I did not know as Abby had any partiality for him. That William is a smart boy. However as you did not mean to insinuate I will make no more comments on him, except to add that I think he will make a devoted *husband*. Dont you. I am sorry that you are laying up Hattys sins against her. I think you had better heap coals of fire upon her head by writing to her constantly until you get an answer. I have some patience with these — School Marms. They have so many trials. I hope you will decide to blot out her iniquities against her. I dont know about this Mr Eastcott giving you concert tickets. I think for my part it looks

rather suspicious. He is a young man I suppose. These Music teachers are always such high souled beings that I think they would exactly suit your fancy. My Garden looks beautifully now. I wish you could see it. I would send you a boquet if I could get a good opportunity. My House plants look very finely now. You wished me to give you some account of Sabra Palmer. She is attending school this term & studying Latin & Algebra. She is very well and happy and sends much love to you. All the girls send much love to you, and wish you to write to them. I have been working a beautiful book mark to give to one of our school girls. Perhaps you have seen it. It is an arrow with a beautiful wreath around it. Have you been working any lately. I get but very little time to work now days, there are so many other things to be done. Have you altered any since I have seen you. Isnt it a funny question for one friend to ask another. I havnt altered any, I dont think except that I have my hair done up and that makes me look different. I can imagine just how you look now. I wonder what you are doing this moment. I have got an idea that you are knitting edging. Are you. Wont you tell me when you answer my letter whether I guessed right or not. Have you got any Forget me not in your garden this summer. I am going to send you as a present in my letter next time. I am pressing some for all the girls and it is not dry yet. You gave me a compliment in your letter in regard to my being a faithful Correspondent. I must say I think I deserve it. I have been learning several beautiful pieces lately. The Grave of Bonaparte is one. Lancers Quick Step—Wood up, and Maiden Weep no more, which is a sweet little song. I wish much to see you and hear you play—I hope you will come to A. before long—Why cant you pass Commencement here. I do wish you would. Do write me often—and tell me all the news, and I will be sure to answer your letters in better season than this one. I have looked my letter over and find I have written nothing worth reading. However you must excuse it on the plea that I have written in great haste—Dont look at the writing and dont let any one see the letter. I want you should keep the seal and whenever you look at it you can think that I am looking at you at the same time.

Accept much love  
from you aff friend Emily E D.

Give my love to all inquiring friends—Am I not safe enough in saying

this—Abby in particular sends love to you and wishes you to write her.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 1). Ink. Addressed on the fold: Miss Abiah P. Root/Feeding Hills/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Aug 4. Dated: Sabbath eve.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 8–12, many omissions; *LL* 113–115, further omissions; *L* (1931) 6–10, several omissions.

The Dickinsons' piano arrived shortly after ED last wrote to Abiah, and here she is able to report progress in her playing. Her music is in a large, bound volume (HCL), but the only piece therein that is mentioned here is "The Grave of Bonaparte," a song, with music by L. Heath, Boston, Oliver Ditson, 1843. No reliable account of her playing has been preserved, though Mrs. Bianchi recorded (*FF* 157) her mother's memory of ED's improvisations. Most of the compositions in her early collection are popular marches, waltzes, and quicksteps. The expression "heap coals of fire," though originating in the Bible (Proverbs 25.22 and Romans 12.20), had become so well known that its use here as a figure of speech would not necessarily mean that ED felt it to be a scripture allusion.

To Abiah Root

25 September 1845

Dearest Abiah,

As I just glanced at the clock and saw how smoothly the little hands glide over the surface, I could scarcely believe that those self-same little hands had eloped with so many precious moments since I received your affectionate letter, and it was still harder for me to believe that I, who am always boasting of being so faithful a correspondent, should have been guilty of negligence in so long delaying to answer it. . . . I am very glad to hear that you are better than you have been, and I hope in future disease will not be as neighborly as he has been heretofore to either of us. I long to see you, dear Abiah, and speak with you face to face; but so long as a bodily interview is denied us, we must make letters answer, though it is hard for friends to be separated. I really believe you would have been frightened to have heard me scold when Sabra informed me that you had decided not to visit Amherst this fall. But as I could find no one upon whom to vent my spleen for your decision, I thought it best to be calm, and therefore have at length resigned myself to my cruel fate, though with not a very good grace. I think you do well to inquire whether



anything has been heard from H. I really don't know what has become of her, unless procrastination has carried her off. I think that must be the case. I think you have given quite a novel description of the wedding. Are you quite sure Mr. F., the minister, told them to stand up and he would tie them in a great bow-knot? But I beg pardon for speaking so lightly of so solemn a ceremony. You asked me in your letter if I did not think you partial in your admiration of Miss Helen H[umphrey], ditto Mrs. P[almer]. I answer, Not in the least. She was universally beloved in Amherst. She made us quite a visit in June, and we regretted more than ever that she was going where we could not see her as often as we had been accustomed. She seemed very happy in her prospects, and seemed to think distance nothing in comparison to a home with the one of her choice. I hope she will be happy, and of course she will. I wished much to see her once more, but was denied the privilege. Abby Wood, our particular friend, and the only particular friend among the girls, is well and sends much love to you. . . . You asked me if I was attending school now. I am not. Mother thinks me not able to confine myself to school this term. She had rather I would exercise, and I can assure you I get plenty of that article by staying at home. I am going to learn to make bread to-morrow. So you may imagine me with my sleeves rolled up, mixing flour, milk, salaratus, etc., with a deal of grace. I advise you if you don't know how to make the staff of life to learn with dispatch. I think I could keep house very comfortably if I knew how to cook. But as long as I don't, my knowledge of housekeeping is about of as much use as faith without works, which you know we are told is dead. Excuse my quoting from the Scripture, dear Abiah, for it was so handy in this case I couldn't get along very well without it. Since I wrote you last, the summer is past and gone, and autumn with the sere and yellow leaf is already upon us. I never knew the time to pass so swiftly, it seems to me, as the past summer. I really think some one must have oiled his chariot wheels, for I don't recollect of hearing him pass, and I am sure I should if something had not prevented his chariot wheels from creaking as usual. But I will not expatiate upon him any longer, for I know it is wicked to trifle with so reverend a personage, and I fear he will make me a call in person to inquire as to the remarks which I have made concerning him. Therefore I will let him alone for the present. . . . How are you getting on with your

music? Well, I hope and trust. I am taking lessons and am getting along very well, and now I have a piano, I am very happy. I feel much honored at having even a doll named for me. I believe I shall have to give it a silver cup, as that is the custom among old ladies when a child is named for them. . . . Have you any flowers now? I have had a beautiful flower-garden this summer; but they are nearly gone now. It is very cold to-night, and I mean to pick the prettiest ones before I go to bed, and cheat Jack Frost of so many of *the treasures* he calculates to rob to-night. Won't it be a capital idea to put him at defiance, for once at least, if no more? I would love to send you a bouquet if I had an opportunity, and you could press it and write under it, The last flowers of summer. Wouldn't it be poetical, and you know that is what young ladies aim to be now-a-days. . . . I expect I have altered a good deal since I have seen you, dear Abiah. I have grown tall a good deal, and wear my golden tresses done up in a net-cap. Modesty, you know, forbids me to mention whether my personal appearance has altered. I leave that for others to judge. But my [word omitted] has not changed, nor will it in time to come. I shall always remain the same old sixpence. . . . I can say no more now, as it is after ten, and everybody has gone to bed but me. Don't forget your affectionate friend,

Emily E. D.

I was very unwell at the time I received your letter & unable to busy myself about anything. Consequently I was down-spirited and I give you all the credit of restoring me to health. At any rate, you may have your share. It really seemed to give me new life to receive your letter, for when I am rather low-spirited nothing seems to cheer me so much as a letter from a friend. At every word I read I seemed to feel new strength & have now regained my usual health and spirits.

Abby Wood and myself have each received a paper & note from her [Harriet Merrill] since she left. Mrs. Merrill has received 1 paper from her and that is all. I have written her two letters, sent her two papers & a package containing a very handsome book mark since I have received anything from her. [ ] really cant help thinking she has forgotten the many happy hours we spent together, and though I try to banish the idea from my mind, for it is painful to me, I am afraid she has forgotten us, but I hope not.

I think she [Helen Humphrey] must be missed much in Southwick, & her mother and sisters must be very lonely without her. Did you visit the friend whom you spoke of in your letter, the following week, & how did you find her. I hope better. I thought of you as perfectly happy all that week. You know you gave me permission in your letter to imagine you in a state of felicity.

\*Abby Wood our particular friend, and the only particular friend among the girls, is well and sends much love to you. She is going to write you soon. She keeps me company at home this term, her aunt thinks it not best for her to attend school so steadily as she has done, and so we are both laid by for a while. Abby had a letter from Sarah [Tracy?] two or three weeks since. She was well and happy and sent much love to all her friends. I think if there is one in the world, who deserves to be happy, that one is Sarah. She is a noble girl, and I love her much. I shall write her soon, and tell her what has been going on here since she left. I received a letter from S Norton a few days ago who now lives in Worcester, formerly lived in Amherst. She lost her mother last spring & I have had two letters from her since. She seems to feel very lonely, now her mother is dead, and thinks were she only alive it would be all she would ask. I pity her much, for she loved her mother devotedly and she feels her loss very keenly. [ ] I had nearly forgotten to mention that Sabra Howe has been spending most of her time in Baltimore, with an uncle and aunt for the last year. She came home 3 or 4 weeks ago to make a visit, & is going to return week after next for a year if nothing happens to prevent. I should think her mother would wish her at home, some of the time with her. But she seems to think it best for Sabra to acquire her education away from home.

. . . much love to you, and wants much to hear from you.

Do write me soon, for as I cannot see you, I must hear from you often, very often. I suppose you will return to Springfield to school before long. I really wish I was going too. But as our dear teacher Miss Adams used to say, if wishes were horses, then beggars might ride. So I will wish no longer, but be content to stay where I am placed. Sabra, Viny, Abby and all the Girls send much love to you.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. See note 3 in "Notes on the Present Text." All

of the letter above the signature has been published; all below it is unpublished except the sentence marked by an asterisk, which is in *Letters* (1931).

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 12-15; *LL* 115-118; *L* (1931) 10-12, dated (presumably by ED): Thursday, Sept. 26 [sic], 1845.

The marriage referred to is that of Helen Humphrey to Albert Palmer. Sabra Palmer was a member of the same family; it was they whom Abiah visited when she came to Amherst.

This is the earliest known letter in which ED paraphrases lines from the Bible and from Shakespeare, the two sources to which she returns again and again throughout her life for quotation or allusion. Here the paraphrase is self-consciously introduced. The scripture source for the first is James 2. 17: ". . . faith, if it hath not works, is dead. . ." The second is from *Macbeth* V, iii, 22-23: "My way of life/Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf."

To Abiah Root

12 January 1846

Abiah, my dear,

Since I received your precious letter another year has commenced its course, and the old year has gone never to return. How sad it makes one feel to sit down quietly and think of the flight of the old year, and the unceremonious obtrusion of the new year upon our notice! How many things we have omitted to do which might have cheered a human heart, or whispered hope in the ear of the sorrowful, and how many things have we done over which the dark mantle of regret will ever fall! How many good resolutions did I make at the commencement of the year now flown, merely to break them and to feel more than ever convinced of the weakness of my own resolutions! The New Year's day was unusually gloomy to me, I know not why, and perhaps for that reason a host of unpleasant reflections forced themselves upon me which I found not easy to throw off. But I will no longer sentimentalize upon the past, for I cannot recall it. I will, after inquiring for the health of my dear Abiah, relapse into a more lively strain. I can hardly have patience to write, for I have not seen you for so long that I have worlds of things to tell you, and my pen is not swift enough to answer my purpose at all. However, I will try to make it communicate as much information as possible and wait to



see your own dear self once more before I relate all my thoughts which have come and gone since I last saw you. I suppose from your letter that you are enjoying yourself finely this winter at Miss Campbell's school. I would give a great deal if I was there with you. I don't go to school this winter except to a recitation in German. Mr. C[oleman] has a very large class, and father thought I might never have another opportunity to study it. It takes about an hour and a half to recite. Then I take music lessons and practise two hours in a day, and besides these two I have a large stand of plants to cultivate. This is the principal round of my occupation this winter. . . . I have just seen a funeral procession go by of a negro baby, so if my ideas are rather dark you need not marvel. . . . Old Santa Claus was very polite to me the last Christmas. I hung up my stocking on the bedpost as usual. I had a perfume bag and a bottle of otto of rose to go with it, a sheet of music, a china mug with *Forget me not* upon it, from S. S., — who, by the way, is as handsome, entertaining, and as fine a piano player as in former times, — a toilet cushion, a watch case, a fortune-teller, and an amaranthine stock of pin-cushions and needlebooks, which in ingenuity and art would rival the works of Scripture Dorcas. I found abundance of candy in my stocking, which I do not think has had the anticipated effect upon my disposition, in case it was to sweeten it, also two hearts at the bottom of all, which I thought looked rather ominous; but I will not enter into any more details, for they take up more room than I can spare.

Haven't we had delightful weather for a week or two? It seems as if Old Winter had forgotten himself. Don't you believe he is absent-minded? It has been bad weather for colds, however. I have had a severe cold for a few days, and can sympathize with you, though I have been delivered from a stiff neck. I think you must belong to the tribe of Israel, for you know in the Bible the prophet calls them a stiff-necked generation. I have lately come to the conclusion that I am Eve, alias Mrs. Adam. You know there is no account of her death in the Bible, and why am not I Eve? If you find any statements which you think likely to prove the truth of the case, I wish you would send them to me without delay.

Have you heard a word from Harriet Merrill or Sarah [Tracy?]. I consider them lost sheep. I send them a paper every week on Monday, but I never get one in return. I am almost a mind to take a hand-car

and go around to hunt them up. I can't think that they have forgotten us, and I know of no reason unless they are sick why they should delay so long to show any signs of remembrance. Do write me soon a very long letter, and tell me all about your school and yourself too.

Your affectionate friend,  
Emily E. Dickinson.

Abby stays at home & I must stay to keep her company you know [ ] Since I last wrote you there have[been] a number of changes in Amherst. In the first place Mr. David Parsons has taken a wife to be the solace of his old age. She is a very superior lady. She has been a widow this number of years. Mr. P. found her in Hartford. She has a daughter about 20 years old, who is going to set up a dress maker's shop here. I am glad he has got a good wife to take care of his children. A. Taylor has gone to Bradford to school for a year. Mr. and Mrs. Carter have moved to Boston and their little charge, Lily Baker, has gone to Ashfield to live. Mr. Baker has gone to Northampton to live. Mr. Holland has been to the west, & brought home a niece just Sophia's age whom he has adopted as his daughter in Sophia's place. She resembles Sophia very much & Mr. Holland seems happier than he has for this long while before[.] Jane Houghton has gone to the south this winter to remain until her sister comes home. Martha Gilbert has gone to Pittsfield to school. Dr. Gridley has gone representative to Boston, this winter.

Viny wishes not to be forgotten in her share of love.

Now if you dont answer this letter soon I shall — I shall do something dreadful. So if you wish to save me the commission of some terrible deed you must write me very soon. Are you not coming to Amherst this winter. I wish father would let me go down to Springfield to see you, and then we could talk over old times. I suppose you are getting along finely in music. I had forgotten to ask after your adorable Mr. Eastcott.

There are a number of additions to the society of girls my age this winter. Mrs. S. Mack has a cousin staying with her, a very pretty girl. Emily Fowler has a cousin with her, Kate Hand by name, a very fine scholar. Then there is a Mrs. Sawtelle spending the winter here whose husband is at Washington, who has a daughter Henrietta who attends school. But I would give more to have Harriet, Sarah and your-

self back than all the new comers. How is your friend Elizabeth Smith this winter. I hope better, though this season is bad for persons who are consumptive.

You cannot think how delighted I was to receive your letter. I had almost feared you had forgotten me. I carried it up to Abby's the same day that I received it.

Abby sends a great deal of love to you and says she shall write you very soon. Nancy Cutler too sends a great deal of love to you and wants much to hear from you. Why do you not ride over to A. this beautiful sleighing. I should be delighted to see you.

Sabra is well and sends much love to you, or would if she knew I was writing.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. See note 3 in "Notes on the Present Text." All of the letter above the signature has been published; all below it is unpublished.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 16-18; *LL* 118-119, in small part; *L* (1931) 13-15, dated (presumably by ED): Amherst, Jan. 12, 1846.

Abiah Root was now attending Miss Campbell's School in Springfield, while Sarah Tracy and Harriet Merrill were at a school for girls in Pittsfield. (*Letters*, ed. 1931, expanded the initials S. T., used in *Letters*, ed. 1894, to Sarah Taylor). An obituary notice in the *Hampshire and Franklin Express* reads: "In this town, Jan. 9 [1846], an infant child of Mr. Charles Wilson, aged 7 months. (Colored)." The Reverend Dr. David Parsons was for many years pastor of the First Church. On Osmyn Baker, see the note for letter no. 4. On the death of Seneca Holland's daughter Sophia, see ED's full account in letter no. 11.

Dorcas, in Acts 9:36-43, is described as "full of good works." The Israelites are referred to as a "stiffnecked people" in Deuteronomy 9:6.

10

To Abiah Root

31 January 1846

Dear Abiah.

I fear you have thought me very long in answering your affectionate letter and especially considering the circumstances under which you wrote. But I am sure if you could have looked in upon me Dear A. since I received your letter you would heartily forgive me for my long delay.

[ 26 ]

I was delighted to receive an answer to my own so soon. Under any other circumstances I should have answered your letter sooner. But I feared lest in the unsettled state of your mind in regard to which choice you should make, I might say something which might turn your attention from so all important a subject. I shed many tears over your letter—the last part of it. I hoped and still I feared for you. I have had the same feelings myself Dear A. I was almost persuaded to be a christian. I thought I never again could be thoughtless and worldly—and I can say that I never enjoyed such perfect peace and happiness as the short time in which I felt I had found my savior. But I soon forgot my morning prayer or else it was irksome to me. One by one my old habits returned and I cared less for religion than ever. I have longed to hear from you—to know what decision you have made. I hope you are a christian for I feel that it is impossible for any one to be happy without a treasure in heaven. I feel that I shall never be happy without I love Christ.

When I am most happy there is a sting in every enjoyment. I find no rose without a thorn. There is an aching void in my heart which I am convinced the world never can fill. I am far from being thoughtless upon the subject of religion. I continually hear Christ saying to me Daughter give me thine heart. Probably you have made your decision long before this time. Perhaps you have exchanged the fleeting pleasures of time for a crown of immortality. Perhaps the shining company above have tuned their golden harps to the song of one more redeemed sinner. I hope at sometime the heavenly gates will be opened to receive me and The angels will consent to call me sister. I am continually putting off becoming a christian. Evil voices lisp in my ear—There is yet time enough. I feel that every day I live I sin more and more in closing my heart to the offers of mercy which are presented to me freely—Last winter there was a revival here. The meetings were thronged by people old and young. It seemed as if those who sneered loudest at serious things were soonest brought to see their power, and to make Christ their portion. It was really wonderful to see how near heaven came to sinful mortals. Many who felt there was nothing in religion determined to go once & see if there was anything in it, and they were melted at once.

Perhaps you will not believe it Dear A. but I attended none of the meetings last winter. I felt that I was so easily excited that I might

[ 27 ]

again be deceived and I dared not trust myself. Many conversed with me seriously and affectionately and I was almost inclined to yield to the claims of He who is greater than I. How ungrateful I am to live along day by day upon Christs bounty and still be in a state of emnity to him & his cause.

Does not Eternity appear dreadful to you. I often get thinking of it and it seems so dark to me that I almost wish there was no Eternity. To think that we must forever live and never cease to be. It seems as if Death which all so dread because it launches us upon an unknown world would be a releif to so endless a state of existense. I dont know why it is but it does not seem to me that I shall ever cease to live on earth—I cannot imagine with the farthest stretch of my imagination my own death scene—It does not seem to me that I shall ever close my eyes in death. I cannot realize that the grave will be my last home—that friends will weep over my coffin and that my name will be mentioned, as one who has ceased to be among the haunts of the living, and it will be wondered where my disembodied spirit has flown. I cannot realize that the friends I have seen pass from my sight in the prime of their days like dew before the sun will not again walk the streets and act their parts in the great drama of life, nor can I realize that when I again meet them it will be in another & a far different world from this. I hope we shall all be acquitted at the bar of God, and shall receive the welcome, Well done Good & faithful Servants., Enter Ye into the Joy of your Lord. I wonder if we shall know each other in heaven, and whether we shall be a chosen band as we are here. I am inclined to beleive that we shall—and that our love will be purer in heaven than on earth. I feel that life is short and time fleeting—and that I ought now to make my peace with my maker— I hope the golden opportunity is not far hence when my heart will willingly yield itself to Christ, and that my sins will be all blotted out of the book of remembrance. Perhaps before the close of the year now swiftly upon the wing, some one of our number will be summoned to the Judgment Seat above, and I hope we may not be separated when the final decision is made, for how sad would it be for one of our number to go to the dark realms of wo, where is the never dying worm and the fire which no water can quench, and how happy if we may be one unbroken company in heaven. *I carried your letter to Abby* and she perused it with the same feelings as myself, and we wished together

that you might choose that better part which shall not be taken from you. Abby sends much love to you and many wishes for your happiness both temporal and eternal. She hopes to hear from you soon, very soon, and Abby and I shall be in a state of suspense until we hear from you & know what choice you have made or whether you have ceased to think of serious things. Do write me very soon and tell me all about yourself & your feelings, and do forgive me for so long neglecting to answer your letter. Although I am not a christian still I feel deeply the importance of attending to the subject before it is too late.

Your aff friend,  
Emily E. D. —

I am delighted to think you are coming here to school next summer, and what delightful times we shall have to be together again as in the days that are past.

We have had a Donation Party here since I received your last letter. Mr & Mrs Colton had some very valuable presents from their friends. I went with Abby Maria, in the evening and had a very pleasant time. The next day the children all met & A & myself, went to help take care of them—

Sabra is well and sends much love to you, She says that she has owed you a letter this long while and shall write you soon as she has time. S. goes to school and finds little time for anything except her studys. Your Uncles family are all well. Please excuse those blots on the first page of my letter, as they [are] Austins work, and accidental. Also excuse the writing for I have written in great haste. I have 4 other letters to answer now, But I have written you first—

I can hardly wait for spring to come, for I so long to see you. It seems to me I shall be almost perfectly happy to see you again.

Have you heard anything yet from Harriet and Sarah. I have not, and I hardly know what to think of it. Miss H. Merrill says she has not heard from Harriet but once since she went away.

I shall write them both soon. Viny sends her love to you and says she shall be very glad to see you back again as shall all the rest of us. Dont fail to answer this letter soon.

Yours,  
Emily E. Dickinson—



MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 2). Ink. Unpublished. Addressed on the fold: Miss Abiah P. Root/Care of Miss Mary Campbell,/Springfield,/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Feb 2. ED's date line: Saturday eve. 1846.

ED's confession of a religious struggle was prompted by Abiah's confidences about her own uncertainties. The more spontaneous side of religious life at Amherst is shown in the celebration in honor of the Reverend Aaron Colton. While it was customary to eke out the minister's salary with gifts of food and firewood, this donation party expressed appreciation for an able young pastor whom the people loved. The scripture allusions and biblical phrases throughout this and the following letter are such as would be heard almost weekly from the pulpit, and indeed daily in the course of revival meetings.

II

To Abiah Root

28 March 1846

Dearest Abiah

It is Sabbath Eve. All is still around me & I feel in a mood to answer your affectionate letter. I am alone before my little writing desk, & wishing I could write news to you as joyful as your letter to me contained. I am alone with God, & my mind is filled with many solemn thoughts which crowd themselves upon me with an irresistible force. I think of Dear Sarah & yourself as the only two out of our circle of five who have found a Saviour. I shed many a tear & gave many a serious thought to your letter & wished that I had found the peace which has been given to you. I had a melancholy pleasure in comparing your present feelings with what mine once were, but are no more. I think of the perfect happiness I experienced while I felt I was an heir of heaven as of a delightful dream, out of which the Evil one bid me wake & again return to the world & its pleasures. Would that I had not listened to his winning words! The few short moments in which I loved my Saviour I would not now exchange for a thousand worlds like this. It was then my greatest pleasure to commune alone with the great God & to feel that he would listen to my prayers. I determined to devote my whole life to his service & desired that all might taste of the stream of living water from which I cooled my thirst. But the world allured me & in an unguarded moment I listened to her syren voice. From that moment I seemed to

lose my interest in heavenly things by degrees. Prayer in which I had taken such delight became a task & the small circle who met for prayer missed me from their number. Friends reasoned with me & told me of the danger I was in of grieving away the Holy spirit of God. I felt my danger & was alarmed in view of it, but I had rambled too far to return & ever since my heart has been growing harder & more distant from the truth & now I have bitterly to lament my folly — & also my own indifferent state at the present time.

I feel that I am sailing upon the brink of an awful precipice, from which I cannot escape & over which I fear my tiny boat will soon glide if I do not receive help from above. There is now a revival in College & many hearts have given way to the claims of God. What if it should extend to the village church & your friends A. & E. feel its influence. Would that it might be so.

Although I feel sad that one should be taken and the others left, yet it is with joy that Abby & I peruse your letter & read your decision in favor of Christ & though we are not in the fold yet I hope when the great shepherd at the last day separates the sheep from the goats we may hear his voice & be with the lambs upon the right hand of God. I know that I ought now to give myself away to God & spend the springtime of life in his service for it seems to me a mockery to spend life's summer & autumn in the service of Mammon & when the world no longer charms us, "When our eyes are dull of seeing & our ears of hearing, when the silver cord is loosed & the golden bowl broken" to yield our hearts, because we are afraid to do otherwise & give to God the miserable recompense of a sick bed for all his kindness to us. Surely it is a fearful thing to live & a very fearful thing to die & give up our account to the supreme ruler for all our sinful deeds & thoughts upon this probationary term of existence. I feel when I seriously reflect upon such things as Dr Young when he exclaimed, O! what a miracle to man is man —

Yesterday as I sat by the north window the funeral train entered the open gate of the church yard, following the remains of Judge Dickinson's wife to her long home. His wife has borne a long sickness of two or three years without a murmur. She relied wholly upon the arm of God & he did not forsake her. She is now with the redeemed in heaven & with the savior she has so long loved according to all human probability. I sincerely sympathise with you Dear A. in the



loss of your friend E. Smith. Although I had never seen her, yet I loved her from your account of her & because she was your friend. I was in hopes I might at sometime meet her but God has ordained otherwise & I shall never see her except as a spirit above. I do not recollect ever hearing you speak of her religious views but I hope her treasure was in heaven. What a blow to the fond hopes of her parents & friends must her early death be. I have never lost but one friend near my age & with whom my thoughts & her own were the same. It was before you came to Amherst. My friend was Sophia Holland. She was too lovely for earth & she was transplanted from earth to heaven. I visited her often in sickness & watched over her bed. But at length Reason fled and the physician forbid any but the nurse to go into her room. Then it seemed to me I should die too if I could not be permitted to watch over her or even to look at her face. At length the doctor said she must die & allowed me to look at her a moment through the open door. I took off my shoes and stole softly to the sick room.

There she lay mild & beautiful as in health & her pale features lit up with an unearthly-smile. I looked as long as friends would permit & when they told me I must look no longer I let them lead me away. I shed no tear, for my heart was too full to weep, but after she was laid in her coffin & I felt I could not call her back again I gave way to a fixed melancholy.

I told no one the cause of my grief, though it was gnawing at my very heart strings. I was not well & I went to Boston & stayed a month & my health improved so that my spirits were better. I trust she is now in heaven & though I shall never forget her, yet I shall meet her in heaven. I know what your feelings must have been at her death, & rejoice that you have consolation from on high to bear it with submission.

Your aff.

Emily E Dickinson.

Please not let S. or any one see this letter. It is only for you. I carried your letter to Abby, & we read it together. I shall show it to no one else, of course, as I never show any of the letters of the 'five' to any one but Abby as she is one of them.

You ask me to excuse the freedom of your letter Dear A. I think all things should be free with friends, & therefore there is nothing to excuse. Do write me a long letter soon, & be sure & come home with

Sabra, for I cannot wait any longer to see you. I really envy Sabra the pleasure of seeing you so soon & should not allow her to have any of you, did she not promise me faithfully to bring you home with her. Sabra says you have a new Piano & I rejoice with you that you have one. Viny says, give my love to Biah — as she always calls you & all the girls send much love to you. Now as a last warning, Dear A. Don't forget to come home with Sabra for it would so bitterly disappoint us if you should not come.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 3). Ink. Unpublished. Dated: Amherst. March. 28. 1846. Addressed on the fold: Miss Abiah P. Root/Feeding Hills./Mass./Per. Sabra. [Palmer].

ED's awakening to the reality of death came when Sophia Holland, daughter of Seneca Holland of Amherst, died on 29 April 1844. She was so deeply affected that her parents sent her to visit Mrs. Dickinson's sister Lavinia (Mrs. Loring Norcross) in Boston. (Emily's first visit to this loved aunt had occurred before Mrs. Norcross's marriage, and shortly after the birth of Emily's sister Lavinia, when both mother and baby were ill. At two and a half Emily was described in a letter by her aunt as "A very good child"; and the writer noted: "She has learned to play on the piano — she calls it the *moosic*.") On her way home from Boston she stopped at Worcester to visit her uncle William Dickinson. She later recalled that the day after her return to Amherst she first met Abiah. (See letter no. 91.) The circle of five girls to whom she refers include, beside herself, Abiah Root, Abby Wood, Harriet Merrill, and Sarah Tracy.

The scripture reference in the third paragraph combines Matthew 13.15 with Ecclesiastes 12.6: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed. . . ." "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken. . ." The paragraph concludes by quoting line 84 (Night I) of Young's *Night Thoughts*.

To Abiah Root

26 June 1846

My dear Abiah,

Though it is a long time since I received your affectionate epistle, yet when I give you my reasons for my long delay, I know you will freely forgive and forget all past offences.

It seems to me that time has never flown so swiftly with me as it

has the last spring. I have been busy every minute, and not only so, but hurried all the time. So you may imagine that I have not had a spare moment, much though my heart has longed for it, to commune with an absent friend. . . . I presume you will be wondering by this time what I am doing to be in so much haste as I have declared myself to be. Well, I will tell you. I am fitting to go to South Hadley Seminary, and expect if my health is good to enter that institution a year from next fall. Are you not astonished to hear such news? You cannot imagine how much I am anticipating in entering there. It has been in my thought by day, and my dreams by night, ever since I heard of South Hadley Seminary. I fear I am anticipating too much, and that some freak of fortune may overturn all my airy schemes for future happiness. But it is my nature always to anticipate more than I realize. . . . Have you not heard that Miss Adams—dear Miss Adams—is here this term? Oh, you cannot imagine how natural it seems to see her happy face in school once more. But it needs Harriet, Sarah, and your own dear self to complete the ancient picture. I hope we shall get you all back before Miss Adams goes away again. Have you yet heard a word from that prodigal,—Harriet? . . .

Your affectionate friend,  
Emily E. D.

I send you a memento in the form of a pressed flower, which you must keep.

A converted Jew has been lecturing here for the last week. His lectures were free, and they were on the present condition of the Jews. Dr. Scudder, a returned missionary, is here now, and he is lecturing also. Have you seen a beautiful piece of poetry which has been going through the papers lately? *Are we almost there?* is the title of it. . . . I have two hours to practise daily now I am in school. I have been learning a beautiful thing, which I long to have you hear. . . .

You cannot imagine how cruelly you disappointed Abby & I in not coming to visit us the last spring. We charged Sabra when she visited you at Feeding Hills, not to return without you & we could hardly speak peaceably to her when she returned alone. I anticipated more than I can express in seeing you & it seemed as if I could not wait to press you to my arms. Why did you not come, dear A. Sabra did not give any reason for your staying away, only that you could not come, which did not at all satisfy A & myself. We had been plan-

ning a great many pleasure excursions— & a great deal of enjoyment against your arrival. Abby was to have you at her house part of the time, I the other part, & Sabra was to have you—how much? Not at all!!

Was not that a contrivance? But now you are out of our reach, & we have no hope of you at present.

Was not your going to Norwich very sudden, & how long do you intend to stay there? Mrs Palmer told me you was not well at all when you left, & I am very anxious to hear a word from you as soon as possible.

& I begin to think she [Harriet Merrill] has entirely forgotten us. I cannot bear to think she has forgotten the many happy hours we used to pass together in each other's society. I hear from Sarah once in a long while.

Mrs! Deacon! Washburn! Mack! wrote to Sarah telling her that Miss Adams was here & inviting her to spend the summer here. But she wrote that they intended to have a family meeting this summer & her father wished her to remain with them this summer.

You know Sarah is an obedient daughter! & she preferred to gratify her father rather than to spend the summer with her friends in Amherst. Do write me soon, dear A. & a long letter may it be.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. See note 3 in "Notes on the Present Text." All of the letter above the signature, and the first two paragraphs below it, have been published; the rest is unpublished.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 18–20; LL 119–120; L (1931) 15–16, dated (presumably by ED): Friday Eve, 1846.

Matthew Berk, the "converted Jew," lectured at Amherst on June 18, 21, and 22. The poem "Are we almost there" had appeared in newspapers as early as 1833. Written by Florence Vane, it was published as a song by Oliver Ditson in 1845, with music by the author. On the sheet, the story of its origin is told thus: "A young lady had visited the South for her health, but finding she hourly grew worse, her friends hurried her home. On the journey she was very much exhausted and continually inquired 'Are we almost there?' A friend, who accompanied her, wrote the song after her death."

Deacon David Mack, as his third wife, married Harriet Parsons Washburn in 1844. She was the widow of the Reverend Royal W. Washburn, pastor of the First Church until his death in 1833.

To Abiah Root

Boston, 8 September 1846

My dear friend Abiah.

It is a long—long time since I received your welcome letter & it becomes me to sue for forgiveness, which I am sure your affectionate heart will not refuse to grant. But many & unforeseen circumstances have caused my long delay. My health was very poor all the latter part of spring & continued so through the summer. As you may have heard, Dear Miss Adams is teaching in Amherst & I was very anxious to attend the Academy last term on that account & did go for 11 weeks, at the close of which I was so unwell as to be obliged to leave school. It cost me many a severe struggle to leave my studies & to be considered an invalid, but my health demanded a release from all care & I made the sacrifice. I had a severe cough for several weeks attended with a difficulty in my throat & general debility. I left school & did nothing for some time excepting to ride & roam in the fields. I have now entirely got rid of my cough & all other bad feelings & am quite well & strong. My health affected my spirits & I was quite down spirited for some time, but have with renewed health regained my usual flow of spirits. Father & Mother thought a journey would be of service to me & accordingly, I left for Boston week before last. I had a delightful ride in the cars & am now quietly settled down, if there can be such a state in the city. I am visiting in my aunt's family & am happy. Happy! Did I say? No not happy, but contented. I have been here a fortnight to day & in that time I have both seen & heard a great many wonderful things. Perhaps you might like to know how I have spent the time here. I have been to Mount Auburn, to the Chinese Museum, to Bunker hill. I have attended 2 concerts, & 1 Horticultural exhibition. I have been upon the top of the State house & almost everywhere that you can imagine. Have you ever been to Mount Auburn? If not you can form but slight conception—of the "City of the dead." It seems as if Nature had formed the spot with a distinct idea in view of its being a resting place for her children, where wearied & disappointed they might stretch themselves beneath the spreading cypress & close their eyes "calmly as to a nights repose or flowers at set of sun."

The Chinese Museum is a great curiosity. There are an endless variety of Wax figures made to resemble the Chinese & dressed in their costume. Also articles of Chinese manufacture of an innumerable variety deck the rooms. Two of the Chinese go with this exhibition. One of them is a Professor of music in China & the other is teacher of a writing school at home. They were both wealthy & not obliged to labor but they were also Opium Eaters & fearing to continue the practice lest it destroyed their lives yet unable to break the "rigid chain of habit" in their own land They left their family's & came to this country. They have now entirely overcome the practice. There is something peculiarly interesting to me in their self *denial*. The Musician played upon two of his instruments & accompanied them with his voice. It needed great command over my risible faculty to enable me to keep sober as this amateur was performing, yet he was so very polite to give us some of his native music that we could not do otherwise than to express ourselves highly edified with his performances. The Writing Master is constantly occupied in writing the names of visitors who request it upon cards in the Chinese language—for which he charges 12½ cts. apiece. He never fails to give his card besides to the person[s] who wish it. I obtained one of his cards for Viny & myself & I consider them very precious. Are you still in Norwich & attending to music. I am not now taking lessons but I expect to when I return home.

Does it seem as though September had come? How swiftly summer has fled & what report has it borne to heaven of misspent time & wasted hours? Eternity only will answer. The ceaseless flight of the seasons is to me a very solemn thought, & yet Why do we not strive to make a better improvement of them?

With how much emphasis the poet has said, "We take no note of Time, but from its loss. 'Twere wise in man to give it then a tongue. Pay no moment but in just purchase of it's worth & what it's worth, ask death beds. They can tell. Part with it as with life reluctantly." Then we have higher authority than that of man for the improvement of our time. For God has said, "Work while the day lasts for the night is coming in the which no man can work." Let us strive together to part with time more reluctantly, to watch the pinions of the fleeting moment until they are dim in the distance & the new coming moment claims our attention. I am not unconcerned Dear A. upon the all important subject, to which you have so frequently & so



affectionately called my attention in your letters. But I feel that I have not yet made my peace with God. I am still a s[tran]ger—to the delightful emotions which fill your heart. I have perfect confidence in God & his promises & yet I know not why, I feel that the world holds a predominant place in my affections. I do not feel that I could give up all for Christ, were I called to die. Pray for me Dear A. that I may yet enter into the kingdom, that there may be room left for me in the shining courts above. Why do you not come to Amherst? I long to see you once more, to clasp you in my arms & to tell you of many things which have transpired since we parted. Do come & make me a long—long, visit this autumn. Will you not? There have been many changes in Amherst since you was there. Many who were then in their bloom have gone to their last account & “the mourners go about the streets.” Abby was in Athol when I left home on a visit to her mother & brothers. She is very well & as lovely as ever. She will write you soon. Abby & I talk much of the happy hours we used to spend together with yourself, Sarah & Hatty Merrill. Oh! what would I give could we all meet again. Do write me soon Dear A & let it be a long—long letter. Dont forget—!!!!

Your aff. friend  
Emily E. D.

Sabra Palmer was well the last time I saw her & she talked of going to Feeding Hills. She may be there now for ought I know. Do you not think it has been unusually hot the past summer. I have really suffered from the heat the last week. I think it remarkable that we should have such weather in September. There were over 100 deaths in Boston last week, a great many of them owing to the heat. Mr Taylor, Our old Teacher, was in Amherst at Commencement time. Oh! I do love Mr. Taylor. It seemed so like old times to meet Miss Adams & Mr Taylor again. I could hardly refrain from singing Auld Lang Syne. It seemed so very apropos. Have you forgotten the memorable ride we all took with Mr Taylor, “Long, Long, ago.”

I hear from Sarah Tracy quite often, but as to Hatty I will not ask you if you ever hear from her for it would oblige you to leave room in your next letter, to say. No, not a word. Sarah writes in very good spirits & I think she is very happy. I am so glad to think Sarah has so good a home & kind friends for she is every way worthy of them. How

glad I should be to find you in A. when I return home. Dont you recollect it was the day I returned from Boston before that I first met you & introduced myself so unceremoniously?

I have you any flowers in Norwich? My garden looked finely when I left home. It is in Viny's care during my absence. Austin entered college last Commencement. Only think!!!!!! I have a brother who has the honor to be a Freshman—Will you not promise me that you will come to Commencement when he graduates? Do! Please! Viny told me if I wrote you while I was gone to give her best love to you. I have altered very much since you was here. I am now very tall & wear long dresses near[ly]. Do you beleive we shall know each other when we meet. Dont forget to write soon.

E.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 4). Ink. Dated: Boston. Sep. 8. 1846. Addressed on the fold: Miss Abiah P. Root/Care of D. B. Tucker Esq/Norwich/Connecticut [readdressed and forwarded to: Feeding Hills/Springfield/Mass]. Postmarked: Boston Sep 10 5 cts [and] Norwich Ct. Sep 14.

PUBLISHED: L (1894) 20-23, in part; LL 120, in small part; L (1931), 16-19, in part.

The strain evident in the preceding short letter is explained by this account of ED's eager preparation for entering Mount Holyoke. Again she was sent to visit her aunt, Mrs. Loring Norcross. The quotation from Young's *Night Thoughts* must have been from memory:

We take no note of time  
But from its loss: to give it then a tongue  
Is wise in man.

*Night I, lines 54-56*

. . . . . pay  
No moment, but in purchase of its worth;  
And what its worth, ask death-beds; they can tell.  
Part with it as with life, reluctant . . .

*Night II, lines 49-52*

ED affixed a small paper seal or wafer, bearing the printed legend “Till we meet,” to the addressed surface of the letter. The scripture quotation in the eighth sentence above her signature is from Ecclesiastes 12.5.



To Abiah Root

late autumn 1846

My dear Abiah,

When I last wrote you I was in Boston, where I spent a delightful visit of four weeks. I returned home about the middle of September in very good health and spirits, for which it seems to me I cannot be sufficiently grateful to the Giver of all mercies. I expected to go into the Academy upon my return home, but as I stayed longer than I expected to, and as the school had already commenced, I made up my mind to remain at home during the fall term and pursue my studies the winter term, which commences a week after Thanksgiving. I kept my good resolution for once in my life, and have been sewing, practising upon the piano, and assisting mother in household affairs. I am anticipating the commencement of the next term with a great deal of pleasure, for I have been an exile from school two terms on account of my health, and you know what it is to "love school." Miss Adams is with us now, and will remain through the winter, and we have an excellent Principal in the person of Mr. Leonard Humphrey, who was the last valedictorian. We now have a fine school. I thank you a thousand times for your long and affectionate letter. . . . I found a quantity of sewing waiting with open arms to embrace me, or rather for me to embrace it, and I could hardly give myself up to "Nature's sweet restorer," for the ghosts of out-of-order garments crying for vengeance upon my defenceless head. However, I am happy to inform you, my dear friend, that I have nearly finished my sewing for winter, and will answer all the letters which you shall deem worthy to send so naughty a girl as myself, at short notice. . . .

Write soon.

Your affectionate

Emily E. D.

Are you never coming to Amherst? You say in your last letter that you are coming in the spring, but your friends Abby & myself after discussing the matter at large have decided that if you have a spark of affection left in your heart for us you must come before. Why can you not come at Thanksgiving time, or at least after snow comes. Do come as soon as you can possibly & be sure that when you do come be it

early or late you will find two warm friends ready to welcome you, by the names of Abby & Emily. Write soon, your aff.

Emily E. D.

I have much to tell you of when I see you, & let that be speedy. Abby sends bushels of love to you, & also a note which I enclose. Have you yet heard from Dear Harriet? I have not. Miss Merrill has written to Harriet & Frances inviting them to spend Thanksgiving. I need not tell you how much I wish to see her & learn the cause of her long silence. How I wish we could all meet at Thanksgiving time. How much we should have to say of the times that are gone. Write very soon.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. See note 3 in "Notes on the Present Text." All of the letter above the first signature has been published; all below it is unpublished.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 24-25; *LL* 120-121; *L* (1931) 20-21, dated (presumably by ED): Sabbath Eve, 1846.

Elizabeth Adams, recently made preceptress of Amherst Academy, remained only until March 1847 (see letter no. 15). Leonard Humphrey, just out of college, was principal for this one year only.

It is probable that the first paragraph of the unpublished section is a concluding section preceding "Write soon. Your affectionate Emily E. D.," and that the remainder is a postscript.

II

LETTERS

15-26

[1847-1848]

*"I am really  
at Mt Holyoke . . ."*

[ 1847-1848 ]

When Emily Dickinson wrote to Abiah Root in 1846 of her happiness in the prospect of going to Mount Holyoke, she did so with the eagerness of a girl whose growth demands wider opportunities. The Seminary proved to be all that she expected, and she had no difficulties adjusting to her studies or to her newfound friends. In spite of a bronchial ailment which enforced a long absence, she completed the courses for the year satisfactorily. But, as the weeks advanced, her spirit grew less settled. The religious atmosphere of all such institutions at that time was heavily charged, and Emily was oppressed by it. Her tie to her home was strengthened rather than loosened by her absence. She returned happily to Amherst in August 1848, her formal education at an end, leaving her only record of the year in the letters she wrote to Austin and to Abiah Root while she was at South Hadley.

15

To Abiah Root

14 March 1847

Ever dear Abiah.

I was delighted to receive your affectionate letter & to know that I was not quite forgotten & should have answered it speedily had I been able. The influenza has been very prevalent & severe here this winter & at the time your letter reached me, I was quite sick with it, so that I could scarcely sit up or do anything at all. My cold was very severe in my head at first, but after I had partly recovered from that, my cold settled upon my lungs & I had a hard cough for 3 or 4 weeks. I am happy to say that I am pretty well now & yours is the first letter which I have answered since I was sick. Surely you will forgive me this once! I suppose that your term at Miss C[ampbell]'s school is near its close, if it has not already closed. Our term in the academy has closed. We have spent our vacation of a fortnight, & school has commenced again since you wrote me. I go this term & am studying Algebra, Euclid, Ecc[lesiastical] History & reviewing Arithmetic again, to be upon the safe side of things next autumn. We have a delightful school this term under the instruction of our former principals, & Miss R. Woodbridge—daughter of Rev. Dr. W. of Hadley, for preceptress. We all love her very much. Perhaps a slight description of her might be interesting to my dear A.—She is tall & rather slender, but finely proportioned, has a most witching pair of blue eyes—rich brown hair—delicate complexion—cheeks which vie with the opening rose bud—teeth like pearls—dimples which come & go like the ripples in yonder little merry brook—and then she is so affectionate & lovely. Forgive my glowing description, for you know I am always in love with my teachers. Yet, much as we love her, it seems lonely & strange without "Our dear Miss Adams." I suppose you know that she has left Amherst, not again to return as a teacher. It is indeed true, that she is to be married. Are you not astonished? Nothing was known, but that she was to return to the school, until a few days before she left for Syracuse, where she has gone to make her "wedding gear." She is to be married

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the first of next April, to a very respectable lawyer in Conway, Mass. She seemed to be very happy in anticipation of her future prospects, & I hope she will realize all her fond hopes. I cannot bear to think that she will never more wield the sceptre, & sit upon the throne in our venerable schoolhouse, & yet I am glad she is going to have a home of her own & a kind companion to take life's journey with her. I am delighted that she is to live so near us, for we can ride up & see her often. You cannot imagine how much I enjoyed your description of your Christmas fete at Miss Campbell's. How magnificent the "Christmas tree" must have been & what a grand time you must have had, so many of you!!! Oh!!! I had a great many presents, Christmas, & New Year's holidays—both—but we had no such celebration of the former which you describe.

Do you ever hear from Dear Sarah & Harriet. I have heard nothing from either of them this age. I sent Hatty a paper the other day & hope it may remind her of old & I fear, forgotten friends. However time will decide. Mrs. Merrill has not heard a word since last fall & does not know why. She thinks Hatty is so busy that she can't get time to write any of us. But if so busy why does she not send us a paper or speak of us when she writes her grandmother? There is a mystery about her silence to me. I hope she is happy &—but I will say no more of her till I see you "face to face" & we can "commune as a man communeth with his friend" one with another. I have one little note that Hatty wrote me soon after she went home, which I value as my own self. It is a precious communication & I will show it to you when you come. You see how much I am anticipating your visit to Amherst & you must not again disappoint my fond expectations. Sabra told me the other day that her father was going to Michigan in May to bring on the widow and orphan child of your lamented "Cousin Albert" & that she had written you not to come until that time on account of their being alone at that time. Abby & I are talking constantly of your intended visit here & I expect we shall quarrel all the time when you really do come about who shall have the most of you. However I do not think we shall conduct quite as warlike as that! You must not think of staying less than a fortnight when you come for so long have we known each other only by symbols traced upon paper, that our words will be many & our intercourse full of affection for those of our number who are distant from us & of joy at our meeting.

Do write me soon—a long letter & tell me how soon you are coming & how long we can keep you when you come.

Your aff.

Emily E. Dickinson

Abby desires to be particularly remembered to you & Viny also sends much love to "Biah." When Miss Adams went away she wished me to tell you when I saw or wrote you that she had been trying to answer your letter this long while & should as soon as she got time. I think that Abby—you & I had better write her a congratulatory letter after she arrives at her new home, telling her of our joy at her union with so worthy a man & giving her sundry bits of advice on the importance of her station & her household cares. What do you think of this idea? If it is your pleasure you will please to signify it by the usual sign in your next letter. Let me hear from you very soon & I will answer speedily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is reproduced from a photostat (AC), formerly in the possession of Mrs. Todd. The letter is dated: Sabbath eve, 1847. A notation on the photostat, in Mrs. Todd's writing, records the address on the envelope: Miss Abiah P. Root/care of Miss Mary Campbell/Springfield/Mass. The address was canceled and the letter forwarded to Feeding Hills. The postmark is given as March 15, 1847.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 25–26, in part; *L* (1931) 21–24, entire, together with a facsimile of the last page.

The spring term at Amherst Academy in 1847 began on March 5. The new preceptress, Rebecca M. Woodbridge, daughter of the Hadley minister, was a girl of twenty. The widow brought home from the West was Helen Humphrey Palmer, Jane Humphrey's sister, who had been one of ED's teachers five years before. The other friends here mentioned are probably Sabra Palmer, Harriet Merrill, Sarah Tracy, and Abby Wood.

To Austin Dickinson

South Hadley, 21 October 1847

My dear Brother, Austin.

I have not really a moment of time in which to write you & am taking time from "silent study hours," but I am determined not to break my promise again & I generally carry my resolutions into effect. I watched you until you were out of sight Saturday evening & then went



to my room & looked over my treasures & surely no miser ever counted his heaps of gold, with more satisfaction than I gazed upon the presents from home.

The cake, gingerbread, pie, & peaches are all devoured, but the apples—chestnuts & grapes still remain & will I hope for some time. You may laugh if you want to, in view of the little time in which so many of the good things have dissappeared but you must recollect that there are *two* instead of *one* to be fed & we have keen appetites over here. I cant tell you now how much good your visit did me. My cough is almost gone & my spirits have wonderfully lightened since then. I had a great mind to be homesick after you went home, but I concluded not to, & therefore gave up all homesick feelings. Was not that a wise determination? How have you all been at home since last week? I suppose nothing of serious importance has occurred, or I should have heard of it, before this time. I received a long letter from Mary. Warner, last evening & if you see her, please give my love to her & tell her I will answer it the first moment, I have to spare from school. By the way, there has been a Menagerie, here this week. Miss. Lyon. provided, "Daddy Hawks" as a *beau*, for all the Seminary girls, who wished to see the *bears* & monkeys, & your sister not caring to go, was obliged to decline the gallantry of said gentleman, which I fear I may never have another opportunity to avail myself of. The whole company stopped in front of the Seminary & played for about a quarter of an hour, for the purpose of getting custom in the afternoon I opine. Almost all the girls went & I enjoyed the solitude finely.

I want to know when you are coming to see me again, for I wish to see you as much as I did before. I went to see Miss Fiske, in her room yesterday & she read me, her letter from Sam & a right merry letter it was too. It sounded like him for all the world. I love Miss. Fiske. very much & think I shall love all the teachers, when I become better acquainted with them & find out their ways, which I can assure you are almost "past finding out." I had almost forgotten to tell you of a dream which I dreamed, last night & I would like to have you turn Daniel & interpret it to me, or if you dont care about going through all the perils which he did I will allow you to interpret it without, provided you will try to tell no lies about it. Well, I dreamed a dream & Lo!!! Father had failed & mother said that "our rye field which she & I planted, was mortgaged to Seth Nims." I hope it is not

true but do write soon & tell me for you know "I should expire with mortification" to have our rye field mortgaged, to say nothing of it's falling into the merciless hands of a loco!!! Wont you please to tell me when you answer my letter who the candidate for President is? I have been trying to find out ever since I came here & have not yet succeeded. I dont know anything more about affairs in the world, than if I was in a trance, & you must imagine with all your "Sophomoric discernment," that it is but little & very faint. Has the Mexican war terminated yet & how? Are we beat? Do you know of any nation about to besiege South Hadley? If so, do inform me of it, for I would be glad of a chance to escape, if we are to be stormed. I suppose Miss Lyon. would furnish us all with daggers & order us to fight for our lives, in case such perils should befall us.

Tell mother, that she was very thoughtful to inquire in regard to the welfare of my shoes. Emily has a shoe brush & plenty of blacking, & I brush my shoes to my heart's content. Thank Viny 10,000. times for the beautiful ribbon & tell her to write me soon. Tell father I thank him for his letter & will try to follow its precepts. Do excuse the writing for I am in furious haste & cant write another word.

Your aff, Emily

Give much love to Father, mother, Viny, Abby, Mary, Deacon Haskell's family & all the good folks at home, whom I care anything about. I shall write Abby & Mary very soon. Do write me a long letter soon & answer all my questions, that is if you can read them. Come & see me as often as you can & bring a good load every time.

Miss Fiske. told me if I was writing to Amherst to send her love. Not specifying to whom, you may deal it out, as your good sense & discretion prompt.

Be a good boy & mind me.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Thursday noon. Addressed on the fold: Austin Dickinson, Esq./Amherst./Mass. Postmarked: South Hadley Mass. Oct 22.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 65-67, in part; L (1931) 63-65, in part; *Home* 68-70, entire.

For Mary Lyon (1797-1849), founder and principal of the Seminary, this was the last full year of teaching. Her associate principal was Mary C. Whitman. Of the nine other teachers, only one is here mentioned, Rebecca W. Fiske, a recent Seminary graduate whose brother Sam was at the time

a junior at Amherst College. Mary Warner and Abby Wood were Amherst friends with whom ED had grown up. The Emily who is mentioned as having the shoebrush was ED's cousin from Monson, Emily Lavinia Norcross, a senior and her roommate. ED had now been at the Seminary for three weeks.

The term "loco-foco," originally applied to any antimonopolistic wing of New York City Democrats (1835), was now used by the Whigs to describe any Democrat, and Democrats in the judgment of the Dickinsons were persons who would bear watching. Seth Nims, a Democrat, was the Amherst postmaster during the presidencies of Polk (1845-1849), Pierce, and Buchanan (1853-1861). The same tone about Nims is evident in letter no. 130, and in one from Lavinia to her brother in 1853 (*Home* 318): "Mr Nims is making awful blunders in the post office. I hope he'll be requested to retire."

ED's comment on the politics of the times, here focused on the Mexican war, should be compared with one written in similar vein near the end of her life (letter no. 950).

17

To Austin Dickinson

South Hadley, 2 November 1847

My dear Brother. Austin.

I have this moment finished my recitation in History & have a few minutes, which I shall occupy in answering your short, but welcome letter. You probably heard that I was alive & well, yesterday, unless, Mr. E. Dickinson was robbed of a note, whose contents were to that effect. But as robbers are not very plenty now a days, I will have no forebodings on that score, for the present. How [are] you! do you get along without me now & does "it seem any more like a funeral," than it did before your visit to your *humble servant* in this place? Answer me!! I want much to see you all at home & expect to 3. weeks from tomorrow, if nothing unusual, like a famine or pestilence, occurs to prevent my going home. I am anticipating much in seeing you on this week Saturday & you had better not dissappoint me!! for if you do, I will harness the "furies" & pursue you with a "whip of scorpions," which is even worse you will find, than the "long oat" which you may remember. Have you heard from Sarah Pynchen. lately & have you found out "those particular reasons" which prevent her corresponding with me, much to her sorrow & my inexpressible regret, for having

few letters to write, now I am away from home, it would be a pleasant method of employing my liesure time & keep my mind from vain & foolish thoughts in the leisure time before mentioned. How long is Mary. Warner. to be absent from home? I received a long letter from her a few days since & sent her a letter directed to Medford, today. I hear often from Abby. & think she has not forgotten me, though absent. She is now my debtor to the amount of one long letter & I wish you would inform her, if you have an opportunity, that I am anxiously waiting to receive it. I received a letter last eve, of an amusing nature & signed by the writer as "John Klima." I read it, but as I found the postage was 10. cts. I concluded it was not intended for me & sent it back to the office. The postmark, was so faint that I could not decipher it & I have not a little curiosity respecting it. If you can give me any clue to the mystery, I will be obliged to you, in due proportion to the amount of information which you are able to give me. How do the plants look now & are they as flourishing as before I went away? I wish much to see them. Some of the girls here, have plants, but it is a cold place & I am very glad that I did not bring any, as I thought of doing. A young lady by the name of Beach, left here for home this morning. She could not get through her examinations & was very wild beside. Miss Lyon. said she should write her father, if she did not change her course & as she did not, her father came for her last night. He was an interesting man & seemed to feel very badly that his daughter should be obliged to leave, on account of bad conduct. Perhaps you saw an account some time since, of a carriage, being presented to Henry Clay. by a Mr. Beach. It was the self same. Why dont Sarah Thompson's brother come over to see her, if he has one spark of affection for her? Please tell him, she is very anxious to see him & will not receive him if he dont come soon. You must tell mother that I was delighted to see her handwriting once more, but that she need not put herself out to write me, for I know just how much she has to do & on that account do not expect to see letters from her very often. Please tell Viny, that if she has any time from the cares of her household to write a line to me, that I would receive it with all due deference to her age & majesty & honors. I suppose "Cook" occupiess most of her time & will therefore excuse her long delay for the past, but not for the future. Cousin Emily. had a letter from Grandmother., last night and she mentioned in her letter, that Mrs Coleman & Eliza were daily

expected in Monson & would probably spend some time at Aunt Flynt's. It seems impossible to me that Mrs. Frink. is dead. How is Jacob. Holt. now? I have not heard a word from him since you were here & feel quite anxious to know how he is. Give much love to him & tell him I will write him as soon as I can find a spare moment for it. Are Thompson. & Newton. going away before I come home? Give much love to Father, Mother, Viny & Abby, also thank Abby for her note & tell her I consider it only a type of what is forthcoming. Do write a long letter to

Your aff Sister.

Emily.

Tell Father, I am obliged to him much, for his offers of "picauniary" assistance, but do not need any. We are furnished with an account-book, here & obliged to put down every mill, which we spend & what we spend it for & show it to Miss. Whitman every Saturday, so you perceive your sister is learning to keep accounts in addition to the other branches of her education. I am getting along nicely in my studies & am happy—quite for me. Wont you ask father for Aunt Elisabeth's address & give it to me when you write me for I wish to write her & dont know to whose care to send it.

South-Hadley — Seminary.

Nov<sup>r</sup> 2d. — 1847—

Bill of. Fare.

Roast. Veal.

Potatoes.

Squash.

Gravy.

Wheat & Brown-Bread.

Butter.

Pepper & Salt.

Dessert.

Apple-Dumpling.

Sauce.

Water.

Is'nt that a dinner fit to set before a King.

Emily. E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Tuesday noon. Addressed on the fold: Austin Dickinson, Esq./Amherst/Mass. Postmark illegible. ED transcribed the "Bill of Fare" onto a separate sheet.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 68-69, in part; *L* (1931) 65-67, in part; *Home* 73, entire.

Austin was now a sophomore at Amherst College. Jacob Holt was an Amherst boy who had attended the Academy with both ED and Abiah Root five years before. She pasted into the back of her Bible a poem by Dr. Holt, clipped from the *Hampshire and Franklin Express* of 6 June 1848, together with an obituary notice from a Boston paper. His demise was therefore one which she wished to recall, though it never had the import clearly evident after the death of Benjamin Newton (see the note to letter no. 153). She solicitously mentions Holt twice again in letters to Austin (nos. 19 and 22), but when she wrote Abiah Root a few days after Holt's death on 12 May 1848 (letter no. 23), she was not moved enough to record the fact, even though she was in Amherst during the weeks of his final illness. The scripture quotation is a reference to 1 Kings 12.11: "... my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." (See also letter no. 57.)

18

To Abiah Root

South Hadley, 6 November 1847

My dear Abiah.

I am really at Mt Holyoke Seminary & this is to be my home for a long year. Your affectionate letter was joyfully received & I wish that this might make you as happy as your's did me. It has been nearly six weeks since I left home & that is a longer time, than I was ever away from home before now. I was very homesick for a few days & it seemed to me I could not live here. But I am now contented & quite happy, if I can be happy when absent from my dear home & friends. You may laugh at the idea, that I cannot be happy when away from home, but you must remember that I have a very dear home & that this is my first trial in the way of absence for any length of time in my life. As you desire it, I will give you a full account of myself since I first left the paternal roof. I came to S. Hadley six weeks ago next Thursday. I was much fatigued with the ride & had a severe cold besides, which prevented me from commencing my examinations until the next day, when I began.



I finished them in three days & found them about what I had anticipated, though the old scholars say they are more strict than they ever have been before. As you can easily imagine, I was much delighted to finish without failures & I came to the conclusion then, that I should not be at all homesick, but the reaction left me as homesick a girl as it is not usual to see. I am now quite contented & am very much occupied now in reviewing the Junior studies, as I wish to enter the middle class. The school is very large & though quite a number have left, on account of finding the examinations more difficult than they anticipated, yet there are nearly 300. now. Perhaps you know that Miss. Lyon is raising her standard of scholarship a good deal, on account of the number of applicants this year & on account of that she makes the examinations more severe than usual.

You cannot imagine how trying they are, because if we cannot go through them all in a specified time, we are sent home. I cannot be too thankful that I got through as soon as I did, & I am sure that I never would endure the suspense which I endured during those three days again for all the treasures of the world.

I room with my Cousin Emily, who is a Senior. She is an excellent room-mate & does all in her power to make me happy. You can imagine how pleasant a good room-mate is, for you have been away to school so much. Everything is pleasant & happy here & I think I could be no happier at any other school away from home. Things seem much more like home than I anticipated & the teachers are all very kind & affectionate to us. They call on us frequently & urge us to return their calls & when we do, we always receive a cordial welcome from them.

I will tell you my order of time for the day, as you were so kind as to give me your's. At 6. o'clock, we all rise. We breakfast at 7. Our study hours begin at 8. At 9. we all meet in Seminary Hall, for devotions. At 10¼. I recite a review of Ancient History, in connection with which we read Goldsmith & Grimshaw. At .11. I recite a lesson in "Pope's Essay on Man" which is merely transposition. At .12. I practice Calisthenics & at 12¼ read until dinner, which is at 12½ & after dinner, from 1½ until 2 I sing in Seminary Hall. From 2¾ until 3¾. I practise upon the Piano. At 3¾ I go to Sections, where we give in all our accounts for the day, including, Absence—Tardiness—Communications—Breaking Silent Study hours—Receiving Company in our rooms & ten thousand other things, which I will not take time or place

to mention. At 4½. we go into Seminary Hall, & receive advice from Mrs. Lyon in the form of a lecture. We have Supper at 6. & silent-study hours from then until the retiring bell, which rings at 8¾, but the tardy bell does not ring until 9¾, so that we don't often obey the first warning to retire.

Unless we have a good & reasonable excuse for failure upon any of the items, that I mentioned above, they are recorded & a *black mark* stands against our names: As you can easily imagine, we do not like very well to get "exceptions" as they are called scientifically here. My domestic work is not difficult & consists in carrying the Knives from the 1st tier of tables at morning & noon & at night washing & wiping the same quantity of Knives. I am quite well & hope to be able to spend the year here, free from sickness. You have probably heard many reports of the food here & if so I can tell you, that I have yet seen nothing corresponding to my ideas on that point from what I have heard. Everything is wholesome & abundant & much nicer than I should imagine could be provided for almost 300. girls. We have also a great variety upon our tables & frequent changes. One thing is certain & that is, that Miss. Lyon & all the teachers, seem to consult our comfort & happiness in everything they do & you know that is pleasant. When I left home, I did not think I should find a companion or a dear friend in all the multitude. I expected to find rough & uncultivated manners, & to be sure, I have found some of that stamp, but on the whole, there is an ease & grace a desire to make one another happy, which delights & at the same time, surprises me very much. I find no Abby. or Abiah. or Mary, but I love many of the girls. Austin came to see me when I had been here about two weeks & brought Viny & Abby. I need not tell you how delighted I was to see them all, nor how happy it made me to hear them say that "they were so lonely." It is a sweet feeling to know that you are missed & that your memory is precious at home. This week, on Wednesday, I was at my window, when I happened to look towards the hotel & saw Father & Mother, walking over here as dignified as you please. I need not tell you that I danced & clapped my hands, & flew to meet them for you can imagine how I felt. I will only ask you do you love your parents? They wanted to surprise me & for that reason did not let me know they were coming. I could not bear to have them go, but go they must & so I submitted in sadness. Only to think Abiah, that in 2½ weeks I shall be at my *own dear home*



again. You will probably go home at Thanksgiving time & we can rejoice with each other.

You dont [know] how I laughed at your description of your introduction to Daniel Webster & I read that part of your letter to Cousin Emily. You must feel quite proud of the acquaintance & will not I hope be vain in consequence. However you dont know Gov<sup>r</sup> Briggs & I do, so you are no better off than I. I hear frequently from Abby & it is a great pleasure to receive her letters. Last eve, I had a long & very precious letter from her & she spoke of see<sup>g</sup> a letter from you. You probably have heard of the death of O. Coleman. How melancholy!! Eliza had written me a long letter giving me an account of her death, which is beautiful & affecting & which you shall see when we meet again.

Abiah, you must write me often & I shall write you as often as I have time. But you know I have many letters to write now I am away from home. Cousin Emily says "Give my love to Abiah."

From your aff  
Emily E. D—

MANUSCRIPT: Mount Holyoke College. Ink. Dated: Mt Holyoke Seminary. Nov<sup>r</sup> 6. 1847.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 27-31, in part; *LL* 124-127, in part; *Mt. Holyoke Alumnae Quarterly* IX (1926), 153-155, entire; *L* (1931) 24-28, in part.

Edward Dickinson was a member of the executive council (1846-1847) of Governor George N. Briggs; both Briggs and his wife had been overnight guests in the Dickinson home. Olivia Coleman, the older sister of ED's friend Eliza, died at Princeton, New Jersey, on September 28, two days before ED had left Amherst for South Hadley. Her father Lyman Coleman, currently teaching at the College of New Jersey (Princeton), had been principal of Amherst Academy (1844-1846) when ED was a student there.

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To Austin Dickinson

South Hadley, 11 December 1847

My dear Brother, Austin.

I heard today that Mr. Colton, from Amherst was to preach here tomorrow & am writing a word, hoping to send by him to you. You

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probably thought me very sisterly, grateful &c. not to answer your kind letter by Mary Snell, but I had no time to write by her & since then I have been occupied every moment & could find no time to write you. I was not very well when Mary was here, but think that I am better now.

I finished my examination in Euclid last eve & without a failure at any time. You can easily imagine how glad I am to get through with 4 books, for you have finished the whole *forever*. I am looking forward to next Wednesday very impatiently — as I expect you and Mary Warner, then. Surely you will not disappoint me. How are you all at home & what are you doing this vacation? You are reading Arabian Nights, according to Viny's statement. I hope you have derived much benefit from their perusal & presume your powers of imagining will vastly increase thereby. But I must give you a word of advice too. Cultivate your other powers in proportion as you allow Imagination to captivate you! Am not I a very wise *young lady*? I had almost forgotten to tell you what my studies are now. "Better *late* than *never*." They are, Chemistry, Physiology & quarter course in Algebra. I have completed four studies already & am getting along well. Did you think that it was my birthday — yesterday? I dont believe I am 17. Is Jacob Holt any better than when you wrote last & is there any hope of him? Give much love to all home friends & tell them I will write a long letter soon. Knowing you to be fond of gimcracks I wish you would accept the enclosed Box of Wafers. Hope you will use them on all extra important occasions, such as writing notes for example &, but I will not specify. My best love to father, mother, Viny, Abby & Mary.

From your aff. Sister  
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC, Ink. Dated: Saturday. P.M. Envelope addressed: Austin. W. Dickinson./Amherst./Mass./Per Mr Colton.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 70, in part; *L* (1931) 68, in part; *Home* 74, entire.

The Reverend Mr. Aaron Colton had been pastor of the First Church since 1840. Mary Snell, about the age of ED, was a daughter of Ebenezer S. Snell, professor of mathematics at Amherst College. The wafers which ED enclosed were probably similar to those mentioned in letter no. 13.

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To Abiah Root

South Hadley, 17 January 1848

My dear Abiah.

Your welcome epistle found me upon the eve of going home & it is needless to say very happy. We all went home on Wednesday before Thanksgiving & a stormy day it was, but the storm must not be in our way, so we tried to make the best of it & look as cheerful as we could. Many of the girls went very early in the morning in order to reach home the same day & when we all sat down to the breakfast table, it seemed lonely enough to see so many places vacant. After breakfast, as we were not required to keep all the family rules, a number of us met together at one of the windows in the Hall to watch for our friends, whom we were constantly expecting. No morning of my life ever passed so slowly to me & it really seemed to me they never were coming, so impatiently did I wait their arrival. At last almost tired out I spied a carriage in the distance & surely Austin was in it. You who have been away so much, can easily imagine my delight & will not laugh, when I tell you how I dashed down stairs & almost frightened my dignified-brother out of his senses. All was ready in a moment or less than a moment & Cousin Emily & myself, not forgetting the driver, were far on our way towards home. The rain fell in torrents & the wind howled around the sides of the mountain over our heads & the brooks below filled by the rain rushed along their pebbly beds almost frightfully, yet nothing daunted, we rode swiftly along & soon the Colleges & the spire of our venerable Meeting House, rose to my delighted vision. Never did Amherst look more lovely to me & gratitude rose in my heart to God, for granting me such a safe return to my *own DEAR HOME*. Soon the carriage stopped in front of our own house & all were at the door to welcome the returned one, from Mother with tears in her eyes down to Pussy who tried to look as gracious as was becoming her dignity. Oh! Abiah, it was the first meeting as it had been the first separation & it was a joyful one to all of us. The storm did not at all subside that night, but in the morning I was waked by the glorious sun himself—staring full in my face. We went to church in the morning & listened to an excellent sermon from our own minister, Mr. Colton. At noon we returned & had a nice dinner,

which, you well know cannot be dispensed with on Thanksgiving day. We had several calls in the afternoon and had four invitations out for the evening. Of course, we could not accept them all, much to my sorrow, but decided to make two visits.

At about 7. o'clock, Father, Mother, Austin, Viny, Cousin Emily & myself to bring up the rear, went down to Prof. Warner's, where we spent an hour delightfully, with a few friends & then bidding them good eve, we young folks, went down to Mrs. S. Mack's accompanied by Sister Mary.

There was quite a company of young people assembled, when we arrived and after we had played many Games, we had in familiar terms a "Candy Scrape." We enjoyed the evening much & returned not until the clock pealed out "Remember 10 o'clock my dear, remember 10, o'clock." After our return, Father wishing to hear the Piano, I like an obedient daughter, played & sang a few tunes, much to his apparent gratification. We then retired & the next day & the next were as happily spent as the eventful Thanksgiving day itself. You will probably think me foolish thus to give you an inventory of my time while at home, but I did enjoy so much in those short four days, that I wanted you to know and enjoy it too. Monday came so soon & with it came a carriage to our door & amidst tears falling thick & fast away I went again. Slowly & sadly dragged a few of the days after my return to the Seminary and I was very homesick, but "after a storm there comes a calm" and so it was in my case. My sorrows were soon lost in study & I again felt happy, if happiness there can be away from "home, sweet home."

Our term closes, this week on Thursday & Friday, I hope to see home and friends once more. I have studied hard this term & aside from my delight at going home, there is a sweetness in approaching rest to me. This term is the longest in the year & I would not wish to live it over again, I can assure you. I love this Seminary & all the teachers are bound strongly to my heart by ties of affection. There are many sweet girls here & dearly do I love some new faces, but I have not yet found the place of a *few* dear ones filled, nor would I wish it to be here. I am now studying "Silliman's Chemistry" & Cutler's Physiology, in both of which I am much interested. We finish Physiology before this term closes & are to be examined in it at the Spring Examinations, about five weeks after the commencement of the next term. I already

begin to dread that time for an examination in Mt. Hol. Sem. is rather more public than in our old academy & a failure would be more disgraceful there, I opine, but I hope to use my father's own words "that I shall not disgrace myself."

What are you studying now? You did not mention that item in your last letters to me & consequently I am quite in the dark as regards your progress in those affairs. All I can say is, that I hope you will not leave *poor me* far behind. Mr Humphrey. brought Mary. Warner. over to see me the other day & we had a delightful time, you well know. Cousin Emily sends much love & wishes you to write her a note, when you answer my letter & may it be speedily.

Your aff. Sister.

Emily E. Dickinson

Our Section have commenced reading Compositions & we read once in a month, during which time we *write two*.

You remember that you wished a remembrance to Jane. Humphrey when you last wrote me & I did [give] the message to her. She sends much love to you & wishes much to see you. In my last letter from home, Viny said that Mrs. A. Palmer. returned to Southwick a fortnight since. Do you not think her very lovely in her garb of mourning? Mary is a sweet child & bids fair to be as interesting as her mother. Helen. seems perfectly bound up in her child and I trust she will be a great comfort to her in her solitary & lonely hours. It seems a very long time since our last meeting and I long to see you once more. There is a great deal of religious interest here and many are flocking to the ark of safety. I have not yet given up to the claims of Christ, but trust I am not entirely thoughtless on so important & serious a subject.

Do you not think we have had some delightful weather for winter & does it not remind you of spring?

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 5). Ink. Dated: Mt. Hol. Fem. Sem. Jan. 17, 1848. Addressed on the fold: Miss. Abiah P. Root./Care of. Miss. Mary. Campbell./Springfield./Mass. Postmarked: South Hadley Mass. Jan. 19.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 31-35, in part; *LL* 128-129, in part; *L* (1931) 29-32, in part.

No Christmas recess customarily was granted at this time in New Eng-

land schools and colleges, for the season was still associated in the orthodox Congregational mind with other Christian orthodoxies which were strongly disapproved. At Mount Holyoke a two week holiday was scheduled between the terms, and ED was to go home again on the twenty first of the month. Helen H. Palmer was last mentioned in a letter to Abiah written in the previous spring (no. 15).

21

To Austin Dickinson

South Hadley, 15 February 1848

My dear Austin.

Miss Fiske. has been to my room & left word that she is going to Amherst, tonight & I can send home by her if I wish. It seemed desolate enough here for a *few days* after my return as Emily. had not come & I was all alone, but I have now got settled down in the *old track* and feel quite at home. I am pretty well & have got rested from my *dissipation*. You have probably recovered from the effects of my visit by this time & can retire in season. Miss. Mann. came in to see me soon after father went home and spoke of enjoying her visit at our house very much.

Emily Norcross. came yesterday about 5. o clock & glad was I to see her I can assure you. She left all Monson folks, well. You probably know that Mary Hills. went home yesterday & dont know when she will return. When is Harriet. Parsons coming back, or has she decided to remain at home?

Please give much love to all at home & to Mary & Abby. Also remember me to your room mate if you please to do so. I do hope you will come & see me as often as you can, for I want much to see you already; it is [such] good sleighing, that you need make no great sacrifice to ride over here I am sure. You must not expect to hear from me often, for I have but little time to write, but you must write me as often as possible.

Your aff.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Tuesday noon. Envelope addressed in ink: Austin W. Dickinson./Amherst./Mass./Per Miss Fiske.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 76-77.



The new term at Mount Holyoke began on February 4. Margaret Mann was one of the Seminary teachers. Mary Hills and Harriet Parsons were Amherst friends attending the Seminary.

To Austin Dickinson

South Hadley, 17 February 1848

My dear Austin.

You will perhaps imagine from my date, that I am quite at leisure & can do what I please even in the forenoon, but one of our teachers, who is engaged, received a visit from her intended, quite unexpectedly yesterday afternoon & she has gone to her home to show him I opine & will be absent until Saturday. As I happen to recite to her in one of my studies, her absence gives me a little time in which to write. Your *welcome* letter found me all engrossed in the history of Sulphuric Acid!!!! I deliberated for a few moments after it's reception on the propriety of carrying it to Miss. Whitman, your friend. The result of my deliberation was a conclusion to open it with moderation, peruse it's contents with sobriety becoming my station, & if after a close investigation of it's contents I found nothing which savored of rebellion or an unsubdued will, I would lay it away in my folio & forget I had ever received it. Are you not gratified that I am so rapidly gaining correct ideas of female propriety & sedate deportment? After the proposed examination, finding it concealed no dangerous sentiments I with great gravity deposited it with my other letters & the impression that I once had such a letter is entirely obliterated by the waves of time. I have been quite lonely since I came back, but cheered by the thought that I am not to return another year I take comfort & still hope on. My visit at home was happy, very happy to me & had the idea of in so short a time returning, been constantly in my dreams, by night & day I could not have been happier. "There is no rose without a thorn" to me. Home was always dear to me & dearer still the friends around it, but never did it seem so dear as now. All, all are kind to me but their tones fall strangely on my ear & their countenances meet mine not like home faces, I can assure you, most sincerely. Then when tempted to feel sad, I think of the blazing fire, & the cheerful meal & the chair empty now I am gone. I can hear the cheerful voices & the merry laugh

& a desolate feeling comes home to my heart, to think I am alone. But my good angel only waits to see the tears coming & then whispers, only this year!! Only 22 weeks more & home again you will be to stay. To you, all busy & excited, I suppose the time flies faster, but to me slowly, very slowly so that I can see his chariot wheels when they roll along & himself is often visible. But I will no longer imagine, for your brain is full of Arabian Nights fancies & it will not do to pour fuel on your already *kindled imagination*. You cant think how disappointed I was to know that Viny was not coming until next week, for I had made all my plans to welcome her on Friday of this week instead of next. But it will be better the longer it is in coming I suppose. All the girls are waiting with impatience to see her & to about a dozen I have given her dimensions. Tell her she must look her prettiest or they will be dissappointed for I have given a glowing account of her.

I suppose you have written a few & received a quantity of Valentines this week. Every night I have looked & yet in vain for one of Cupid's messengers. Many of the girls have received very beautiful ones & I have not quite done hoping for one. Surely *my friend* THOMAS, has not lost all his former affection for me. I entreat you to tell him I am pining for a Valentine. I am sure I shall not very soon forget last Valentine week nor any the sooner, the fun I had at that time. Probably, Mary, Abby & Viny have received scores of them from the infatuated wights in the neighborhood while your *highly accomplished & gifted elder sister* is entirely overlooked. Monday afternoon, Mistress Lyon arose in the hall & forbade our sending "any of those foolish notes called Valentines." But those who were here last year, knowing her opinions, were sufficiently cunning to write & give them into the care of Dickinson, during the vacation, so that about 150. were despatched on Valentine morn, before orders should be put down to the contrary effect. Hearing of this act, Miss Whitman by & with the advice & consent of the other teachers, with frowning brow, sallied over to the Post office, to ascertain if possible, the number of Valentines and worse still, the names of the offenders. Nothing has yet been heard as to the amount of her information, but as Dickinson is a good hand to help the girls & no one has yet received sentence, we begin to think her mission unsuccessful. I have not written one nor do I now intend to. Your injunction to pile on the wood has not been unheeded for we have been obliged to obey it to keep from freezing up. I have



had a severe cold for a few days, but think it is better now. We cannot have much more cold weather I am sure, for spring is near. Have you decided who to bring when you come? As to my opinion on that point, I confess I am in a strait betwixt two, Mary & Abby. Your better judgment will I am certain decide in the right and I will therefore leave it entirely in your hands.

Do you intend to give Miss. Whitman a ride? You had better resign that honor to your room-mate when he comes over again I judge. I had a note from E. Coleman, a few days since, but she said not a word of any of the family. You can probably imagine the drift of her remarks, without further information. I cannot say half that I want to for want of space.

Your affectionate Sister.

Emily.

How is Jacob. Holt now? I wish much to hear from him as not one word have I heard since I left home about him. Does your Rooster yet persist in his foolish habit of crowing under his window? I hope he has long ere this repented him of his folly. Professor. Smith. preached here last Sabbath & such sermons I never heard in my life. We were all charmed with him & dreaded to have him close. I understand the people of S. Hadley have given Mr. Belden of East-street a call to settle here. If he accepts, I hope it *will*, *will* not be until my year is out. Will you ask Viny. to get my History & Topic book, of Harriet. Parsons & bring them with her, for reviews commence very soon & I shall need them. Also will she bring a little Sweet Flag & that Comb, which I did my hair up with when I came home from Boston? Write me as long a letter as this is very soon.

Give my best love to Father, Mother, Viny, Mary, Abby, Dea. Haskell's family & all who inquire for me.

Please not to show this letter for it is strictly confidential & I should feel badly to have you show it.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Thursday morn. Addressed on the fold: Austin. W. Dickinson./Amherst./Mass. Postmark illegible. The letter is sealed with a diamond-shaped wafer on which is printed "Believe me," followed by the first bar of the well-known musical rendering of "Believe me, if all these endearing young charms."

PUBLICATION: *L.* (1894) 70-73, in part; *L.L.* 130-132, in part; *L.* (1931) 60-71, in part; *Home* 78-80, entire.

As the year advanced, ED's homesickness increased. The strain must have been apparent to her family, for her father had already decided not to send her to Mount Holyoke for a second year.

The custom of exchanging valentines was not limited at this time to one day, but extended through the entire "Valentine week." The Reverend Henry B. Smith was a member of the Amherst College faculty; the Reverend Pomeroy Belden was pastor of the East Parish church in Amherst. ED's friend Thomas has not been identified.

To Abiah Root

South Hadley, 16 May 1848

My dear Abiah,

You must forgive me, indeed you must, that I have so long delayed to write you, and I doubt not you will when I give you all my reasons for so doing. You know it is customary for the first page to be occupied with apologies, and I must not depart from the beaten track for one of my own imagining. . . . I had not been very well all winter, but had not written home about it, lest the folks should take me home. During the week following examinations, a friend from Amherst came over and spent a week with me, and when that friend returned home, father and mother were duly notified of the state of my health. Have you so treacherous a friend?

Now knowing that I was to be reported at home, you can imagine my amazement and consternation when Saturday of the same week Austin arrived in full sail, with orders from head-quarters to bring me home at all events. At first I had recourse to words, and a desperate battle with those weapons was waged for a few moments, between my *Sophomore* brother and myself. Finding words of no avail, I next resorted to tears. But woman's tears are of little avail, and I am sure mine flowed in vain. As you can imagine, Austin was victorious, and poor, defeated I was led off in triumph. You must not imbibe the idea from what I have said that I do not love home—far from it. But I could not bear to leave teachers and companions before the close of the term and go home to be dosed and receive the physician daily,

and take warm drinks and be consoled with on the state of health in general by all the old ladies in town.

Haven't I given a ludicrous account of going home sick from a boarding-school? Father is quite a hand to give medicine, especially if it is not desirable to the patient, and I was dosed for about a month after my return home, without any mercy, till at last out of mere pity my cough went away, and I had quite a season of peace. Thus I remained at home until the close of the term, comforting my parents by my presence, and instilling many a lesson of wisdom into the budding intellect of my only sister. I had almost forgotten to tell you that I went on with my studies at home, and kept up with my class. Last Thursday our vacation closed, and on Friday morn, midst the weeping of friends, crowing of roosters, and singing of birds, I again took my departure from home. Five days have now passed since we returned to Holyoke, and they have passed very slowly. Thoughts of home and friends "come crowding thick and fast, like lightnings from the mountain cloud," and it seems very desolate.

Father has decided not to send me to Holyoke another year, so this is my *last term*. Can it be possible that I have been here almost a year? It startles me when I really think of the advantages I have had, and I fear I have not improved them as I ought. But many an hour has fled with its report to heaven, and what has been the tale of me? . . . How glad I am that spring has come, and how it calms my mind when wearied with study to walk out in the green fields and beside the pleasant streams in which South Hadley is rich! There are not many wild flowers near, for the girls have driven them to a distance, and we are obliged to walk quite a distance to find them, but they repay us by their sweet smiles and fragrance.

The older I grow, the more do I love spring and spring flowers. Is it so with you? While at home there were several pleasure parties of which I was a member, and in our rambles we found many and beautiful children of spring, which I will mention and see if you have found them, — the trailing arbutus, adder's tongue, yellow violets, liverleaf, blood-root, and many other smaller flowers.

What are you reading now? I have little time to read when I am here, but while at home I had a feast in the reading line, I can assure you. Two or three of them I will mention: *Evangeline*, *The Princess*, *The Maiden Aunt*, *The Epicurean*, and *The Twins and Heart* by

Tupper, complete the list. Am I not a pedant for telling you what I have been reading? I have you forgotten your visit at Amherst last summer, and what delightful times we had? I have not, and I hope you will come and make another and a longer, when I get home from Holyoke. Father wishes to have me at home a year, and then he will probably send me away again, where I know not. . . .

Ever your own affectionate

Emilie E. Dickinson.

P. S. My studies for this series are Astronomy and Rhetoric, which take me through to the Senior studies. What are you studying now, if you are in school, and do you attend to music? I practise only one hour a day this term.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 36-39; LL 133-136; L (1931) 32-35, dated (presumably by ED): Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary. May 16, 1848.

Longfellow's *Evangeline* and Tennyson's *The Princess* were both reviewed in the *Hampshire and Franklin Express*, 30 March 1848. *The Maiden Aunt* is a novel by Marcella Bute Smedley; *The Epicurean*, a prose romance by Thomas Moore; and *The Twins* and *The Heart* are two novels (bound together) by Martin Tupper.

[The paragraph that follows was published by itself in L (1931) 28, among the letters to Abiah Root. It is probably part of this letter, omitted at the point indicated by dots in the fourth paragraph.]

I tremble when I think how soon the weeks and days of this term will all have been spent, and my fate will be sealed, perhaps. I have neglected the *one thing needful* when all were obtaining it, and I may never, never again pass through such a season as was granted us last winter. Abiah, you may be surprised to hear me speak as I do, knowing that I express no interest in the all-important subject, but I am not happy, and I regret that last term, when that golden opportunity was mine, that I did not give up and become a Christian. It is not now too late, so my friends tell me, so my offended conscience whispers, but it is hard for me to give up the world. I had quite a long talk with Abby while at home and I doubt not she will soon cast her burden on Christ. She is sober, and keenly sensitive on the subject, and she says she only desires to be good. How I wish I could say that

with sincerity, but I fear I never can. But I will no longer impose my own feelings even upon my friend. Keep them sacred, for I never lisped them to any save yourself and Abby.

24

To Austin Dickinson

South Hadley, 29 May 1848

My dear Austin.

I received a letter from home on Saturday, by Mr. Gilbert Smith and father wrote in it that he intended to send for Cousin Emily. & myself on Saturday of this week to spend the Sabbath at home. I went to Miss. Whitman, after receiving the letter & asked her if we could go if you decided to come for us. She seemed stunned by my request & could not find utterance to an answer for some time. At length, she said "did you not know it was contrary to the rules of the Seminary to ask to be absent on the Sabbath"? I told her I did not. She then took a Catalogue, from her table & showed me the law in full at the last part of it.

She closed by saying that we could not go & I returned to my room, without farther ado. So you see I shall be deprived of the pleasure of a visit home & you that of seeing me, if I may have the presumption to call it a *pleasure*!! The Teachers are not willing to let the girls go home this term as it is the last one & as I have only nine weeks more to spend here, we had better be contented to obey the commands. We shall only be the more glad to see one another after a longer absence, that will be all.

I was highly edified with your *imaginative* note to me & think your flights of fancy indeed wonderful at your age!! When are you coming to see me, or dont you intend to come at all? Viny told us, you were coming this week & it would be very pleasant to us to receive a visit from your *highness* if you can be absent from home long enough for such a purpose.

Is there anything new at home & wont you write me a long letter telling me all news? Mary. Warner. has not yet answered the note which I sent her at the commencement of the term. I cant write longer.

Your aff.

Emilie.

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MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Monday morn. Addressed on the fold: Austin. W. Dickinson./Amherst./Mass.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 74-75, in part; *LL* 132-133, in part; *L* (1931) 71-72, in part; *Home* 81-82, entire.

The Seminary rule for that year which ED refers to reads thus: "The young ladies do not make or receive calls on the Sabbath. Neither should they spend a single Sabbath from the Seminary in term time. . . . The place of weekly labors is the most favorable spot for the scenes of the Sabbath."

25

To Austin Dickinson

South Hadley, 25 June 1848

My dear Austin.

I was very glad to see your friend, Bowdoin, for so long a time had passed since I last heard from home, that I began to consider myself entirely deserted.

Your note & father's letter, were both acceptable, only they were quite too brief, not lengthy enough, to suit me. I am much delighted with the idea of going home, but dont expect to realize it until fairly there, within sight & sound of you all. I wonder if you know, that today is the seventh Sabbath, since I left home. Quite a long time since I have seen you all and the many good people in Amherst. Bowdoin, tells me of no news, excepting the following. Cherries are fast getting ripe & the new generation attended the Senior Levee, a short time since, both of which facts, were received by me, with proper resignation. Surely, things must have changed in quiet, peace loving Amherst.

Jane Humphrey. wishes me to tell you that she would be happy to accept your invitation, but as Misses. Lyon & Whitman. are not willing & tell her it will lower her classification if she goes, she feels obliged to decline. I believe, Miss. Fiske. has given up the idea of going also. Father wrote that you were expecting Uncle Joel. [Norecross] at our house, yesterday and you are probably having grand times among yourselves. Louisa. Dickinson & Antoinette. Baker., went home on Friday last & expect to return tomorrow morning. She could not have had permission, had it not been that her friends from New. York. were there and desired to see her. Bowdoin. had quite an adventure about seeing

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me, which he will tell you. Yesterday afternoon I had a call from a sister of Tutor [Lewis] Greene's, who has been teaching school in Brooklyn & is quite intimate in Aunt Kate's family. She said Aunt Catharine. was coming to Amherst, next week. I received a long letter from Cousin Zebina [Montague], about a fortnight since & answered it last week. I want much to see you all & think Monday & Tuesday will be rather dull days to me. I do wish they might seem as long to you. One thing in your note made me feel badly, & you can guess what it was. Give my best love to Father, Mother, Viny & Uncle Joel, if he is indeed at our house. Tell Viny, the letter she sent me last, was not received & I guess it was lost on the way. I hope a similar fate will not befall any others, I should otherwise obtain. I have an action against John. Spencer, which you shall hear of at my coming. Emily & I shall be all ready at precisely 5. o'clock.

Your aff. Sister.

Emilie.

My love to Abby & Mary. What an honor, Viny had in attending the Levee. I hope she bears that & others similar, in becoming humility. Cousin Emily. can hardly eat or sleep, so perfectly happy is she with the idea of going home with me to the great Festival. She sends her love to all the household.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sabbath noon. Addressed on the fold: Austin. W. Dickinson./Amherst./Mass.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 83-84.

The term at Mount Holyoke was not to end until August 3, but ED had a short visit at home when she and her cousin, among others, were allowed to go to Amherst for the opening of the new "Cabinet," a small museum at Amherst College. The ceremony coincided with the Junior Exhibition on June 29.

To Abiah Root

29 October 1848

My own dear Abiah,

For so I will still call you, though while I do it, even now I tremble at my strange audacity, and almost wish I had been a little more humble not quite so presuming.

Six long months have tried hard to make us strangers, but I love you better than ever notwithstanding the link which bound us in that golden chain is sadly dimmed, I feel more reluctant to lose you from that bright circle, whom I've called *my friends* I mailed a long letter to you the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, & patiently have I waited a reply, but none has yet cheered me.

Slowly, very slowly, I came to the conclusion that you had forgotten me, & I tried hard to forget you, but your image still haunts me, and tantalizes me with fond recollections. At our Holyoke Anniversary, I caught one glimpse of your face, & fondly anticipated an interview with you, & a reason for your silence, but when I thought to find you search was vain, for "the bird had flown." Sometimes, I think it was a fancy, think I did not *really* see my old friend, but her spirit, then your well known voice tells me it was no spirit, but yourself, living, that stood within that crowded hall & spoke to me—Why did you not come back that day, and tell me what had sealed your lips toward me? Did my letter never reach you, or did you coolly decide to love me, & write to me no more? If you love me, & never received my letter—then may you think yourself wronged, and that rightly, but if you don't want to be my friend any longer, say so, & I'll try *once* more to blot you from my memory. Tell me very soon, for suspense is intolerable. I need not tell you, this is from,

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 6). Ink. Unpublished. Dated: Amherst. October 29<sup>th</sup>—1848.

The "Anniversary" at which ED caught a glimpse of Abiah was the Seminary commencement exercises, held on August 3. She was mistaken about the time that had passed since her last letter, which was written in mid-May.



III

LETTERS

27-39

[1849-1850]

*"Amherst is alive  
with fun this winter . . ."*

The years 1849-1850 were a time of expansion for Emily Dickinson. Her health was better, and new books and interests absorbed her. After her return from Mount Holyoke, she made new friends in the town and the college, and it was at this time that she enjoyed the happy companionship of Ben Newton. She afterward felt that the friendship was one of the experiences which had most enlarged her mind. None of her letters to him have survived.

In 1850, Austin was a senior at Amherst College, and some of his classmates, as well as the young tutors at the college, came frequently to the house. Lavinia was away at school, not at Mount Holyoke, but at Wheaton Seminary in Ipswich, where Mary Lyon had taught before she founded her own institution.

Among the girls at Amherst whom Emily saw most often was Susan Gilbert, who had returned in the autumn of 1848, after completing her schooling at Utica, New York. Another was Emily Fowler, whom she had not known well as a child because of a difference in age. One of the amusements of the winter season was the sending of valentines, and it is with a letter of the valentine season that this group begins.

To William Cowper Dickinson

14 February 1849

Cousin William,

'Tis strange that a promise lives, and brightens, when the day that fashioned it, has mouldered, & stranger still, a promise looking to the day of Valentines for its fulfillment.

Mine has been a very pleasant monitor, a friend, and kind companion, not a stern tyrant, like your own, *compelling* you to do what you would not have done, without compulsion.

Last Wednesday eve, I thought you had forgotten all about your promise, else you looked upon it as one foolish, & unworthy of fulfillment, now, I know your memory was faithful, but I sadly fear, your inclination, quarrelled with its admonitions.

A little condescending, & sarcastic, your Valentine to me, I thought; a little like an Eagle, stooping to salute a Wren, & I concluded once, I dared not answer it, for it seemed to me not quite becoming — in a bird so lowly as myself — to claim admittance to an Eyrie, & conversation with its King.

But I have changed my mind — & you are not too busy, I'll chat a while with you.

I'm a "Fenestrellan captive," if this world be "Fenestrella," and within my dungeon yard, up from the silent pavement stones, has come a plant, so frail, & yet so beautiful, I tremble lest it die. 'Tis the first living thing that has beguiled my solitude, & I take strange delight in its society. It's a mysterious plant, & sometimes I fancy that it whispers pleasant things to me — of freedom — and the future. Can't guess its name? 'Tis "Picciola"; & to you Cousin William, I'm indebted for my wondrous, new, companion.

I know not how to thank you, for your kindness. Gratitude is poor as poverty itself — & the "10,000 thanks" so often cited, seem like faintest shadows, when I try to stamp them here, that I may send their impress to you. "Picciola's" first flower — I will keep for you. Had not

it's gentle voice, & friendly words—assured me of a “kind remembrance”—I think I should not have presumed thus much.

The last week has been a merry one in Amherst, & notes have flown around like, snowflakes. Ancient gentlemen, & spinsters, forgetting time, & multitude of years, have doffed their wrinkles—in exchange for smiles—even this aged world of our's, has thrown away it's staff—and spectacles, & *now* declares it will be young again.

Valentine's sun is setting now however, & before tomorrow eve, old things will take their place again. Another year, a long one, & a stranger to us all—must live, & die, before it's laughing beams will fall on us again, & of “that shadowy band in the silent land” may be the present writers of these merry missives.

But I am moralizing, forgetful of you, sisterless—and for *that* reason prone to mournful reverie—perhaps. Are you happy, now that she is gone? I know you must be lonely since her leave, and when I think of you nowdays, t'is of a “melancholy gentleman, standing on the banks of river Death—sighing & beckoning Charon to convey him over.”

Have I guessed right, or are you merry as a “Fine old English Gentleman—all of the Olden time”?

I'll write to Martha soon, for tis *as* desolate to be without her letters; *more* desolate than you can think. I won't forget some little pencil marks I found in reading “Picciola,” for they seem to me like silent sentinels, guarding the towers of some city, in itself—too beautiful to be unguarded; I've read those passages with heightened interest on their account.

Long life to Mr Hammond, & a thousand Valentines for every year of it.

Pardon my lengthiness—if it be not unpardonable.

Sincerely, your cousin,

Emily E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: Dickinson. Ink. Dated: Valentine morn. Unpublished.

William Cowper Dickinson, valedictorian of the class of 1848, was a friend but not a close relative of ED. He returned as tutor in 1851, but this letter clearly was written before that time. Charles Hammond was principal of Monson Academy where Dickinson was teaching.

*Picciola* is the title of a romantic tale of Napoleonic times by X. B. Saintine (Joseph Xavier Boniface), published in 1839. In the following

decade it went through many European and American editions, the latest of which was a profusely illustrated one with decorated binding, published at Philadelphia in 1849. The story concerns a political prisoner in the stronghold of Fenestrella, whose observation of a plant growing between the stones of his prison courtyard transforms his philosophy and changes his fortunes. The Italian jailer's exclamation, “Povera picciola!” (poor little thing), provides the name which the prisoner gives the unknown flower.

To Elbridge G. Bowdoin

about December 1849

Mr Bowdoin.

If all these leaves were altars, and on every one a prayer that Currer Bell might be saved—and you were God—would you answer it?

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 137; LL 136; L (1931) 136.

The date given by Mrs. Todd, December 1849, is confirmed by the handwriting. A penciled note on the third page of the folded sheet, in Bowdoin's hand, reads: “On returning Jane Eyre. The leaves mentioned were box Leaves, sent to me in a little bouquet.” ED cannot be alluding to an illness of Charlotte Brontë (who died in 1855), for the book had been published only the year before, and the identity of the writer was still unknown. Her plea simply expresses her hope that Currer Bell will live long and write many more books.

To Joel Warren Norcross

11 January 1850

Dearest of all dear Uncles.

Sleep carried me away, and a dream passed along, a dream all queer, and curious—it was a dream of warning—I ought not to hide it from whom it concerns—God forbid that you trifle with vision so strange—the Spirit of love entreat you—the Spirit of warning guide—and the all helping hold—and prevent you from falling! And I dreamed—and beheld a company whom no man may number—all men in their youth—all strong and stout-hearted—nor feeling their burdens for

strength—nor waxing faint—nor weary. Some tended their flocks—and some sailed on the sea—and yet others kept gay stores, and deceived the foolish who came to buy. They made life one summer day—they danced to the sound of the lute—they sang old snatches of song—and they quaffed the rosy wine—One promised to love his friend and one vowed to defraud no poor—and *one* man told a lie to his niece—they all did sinfully—and their lives were not yet taken. Soon a change came—the young men were old—the flocks had no shepherd—the boat sailed alone—and the dancing had ceased—and the wine-cup was empty—and the summer day grew cold—Oh fearful the faces then! The Merchant tore his hair—and the Shepherd gnashed his teeth—and the Sailor hid himself—and prayed to die. Some kindled the scorching fire—some opened the earthquake's mouth—the winds strode on to the sea—and serpents hissed fearfully. Oh I was very much scared and I called to see who they were—this torment waited for—I listened—and up from the pit *you* spoke! You couldnt get out you said—no help could reach so far—you had brought it upon yourself—I left you alone to die—but they told me the whole of the crime—you had broken a promise on earth—and now t'was too late to redeem it. Do you wonder at my alarm—do you blame me for running to tell you? It wasnt *all* a dream—but I know it will be fulfilled unless you stop sinning now—it is not too late to do right. Do you take any hints I wonder—can you guess the meaning of things—not yet aroused to the truth. You villain without a rival—unparalleled doer of crimes—scoundrel unheard of before—disturber of public peace—"creation's blot and blank"—state's prison filler—*magnum bonum* promise maker—harum scarum promise breaker—Oh what can I call you more? Mrs Caudle would call you "a gentleman"—that is altogether too good. Mrs Partington "a very fine fellow"—neither does this apply—I call upon all nature to lay hold of you—let fire burn—and water drown—and light put out—and tempests tear—and hungry wolves eat up—and lightning strike—and thunder stun—let friends desert—and enemies draw nigh and gibbets *shake* but never *hang* the house you walk about in! My benison not touch—my malison pursue the body that hold your spirit! Any other afflictions which now slip my mind shall be looked up and forwarded to you immediately. How will you bear them all—will they depress—and make life hang too heavily? Would that they might thus do—but I look for no such results—you will bear them

like a Salamander. Old fashioned Daniel couldnt take things more coolly. Does sarcasm affect you—or the sneers of the world? "Burn flame—summer heat—swelter toad—I have cursed thee—and thou art accursed."

Dont remember a letter I was to receive when you got back to Boston—how long and how broad—how high—or deep it should be—how many cars it should sink—or how many stages tip over—or the shaking of earth when it rested—Hav'nt the faintest recollection of the hearts to be lighter—the eyes to grow brighter and the life made longer with joy it should give—a most unfortunate mem'ry—the owner deserves our pity! Had you a pallid hand—or a blind eye—we would talk about coming to terms—but you have sent my father a letter—so there remains no more but to fight. War Sir—"my voice is for war!" Would you like to try a duel—or is that too quiet to suit you—at any rate I shall kill you—and you may dispose of your affairs with that end in view. You can take Chloroform if you like—and I will put you beyond the reach of pain in a twinkling. The last duel I fought didnt take but five minutes in all—the "wrapping the drapery of his couch about him—and lying down to pleasant dreams" included. Lynch laws provide admirably now for wives—and orphan children—so duels seem differently from what they formerly did to me. Uncle Loring—and Aunt Lavinia *will* miss you some to be sure—but trials *will* come in the best of families—and I think they are usually for the best—they give us new ideas—and *those* are not to be laughed at. How have you been bodily, and mentally since you were up to see us? How do you sleep *o nights*—and is your appetite waning? These are infallible symptoms, and I only thought I'd inquire—no harm done I hope. Harm is one of those things that I always mean to keep clear of—but somehow my intentions and me dont chime as they ought—and people will get hit with stones that I throw at my neighbor's dogs—not only *hit*—that is the least of the whole—but they insist upon blaming *me* instead of the *stones*—and tell me their heads ache—why it is the greatest piece of folly on record. It would do to go with a story I read—one man pointed a loaded gun at a man—and it shot him so that he died—and the people threw the owner of the gun into prison—and afterwards hung him for *murder*. Only another victim to the misunderstanding of society—such things should not be permitted—it certainly is as much as one's neck is worth to live in so stupid a world—



and it makes one grow weary. Life isn't what it purports to be. Now when I walk into your room and pluck your heart out that you die—I kill you—hang me if you like—but if I stab you while sleeping the dagger's to blame—it's no business of mine—you have no more right to accuse me of injuring you than anything else I can think of. That we understand capital punishment, and one another too I verily believe—and sincerely hope—for it's so trying to be read out of the wrong book when the right one is out of sight.

Your friends in town are comfortable—or *were* at the last accounts—tho' I hav'nt been into the Kelloggs' for several days now. Still I have seen neither Doctor, or Sexton around, and will take the fearful responsibility of assuring you that they live, and are well. You will perceive that the whole stands for a part in this place—it being one of those exceedingly *aspeny* cases that the bungling had better let alone. Have you found *Susannah* yet? "Roses will fade—time flies on—Lady of beauty,"—the whole hymn is too familiar to you now for me to repeat it. Amherst is alive with fun this winter—might you be here to see! Sleigh rides are as plenty as people—which conveys to my mind the idea of very plentiful plenty. How it may seem to you I don't calculate at all—but presume you can see the likeness if you get the right light upon it. Parties cant find fun enough—because all the best ones are engaged to attend balls a week beforehand—beaus can be had for the taking—maids smile like the mornings in June—Oh a very great town is this! Chorus—a "still greater one is this." "Now for the jovial bowl," etc. You are fond of singing—I think—and by close, and assiduous practise may learn these two before I see you again. Exer-tion never harmed anybody—it wont begin now.

Are you all well—how are the children—please give the love of all our household to all the members of your's. Dont leave Cousin Albert out in my part! Vinnie has been to see you—she wrote what splendid times she had. We are very lonely without her—hope to linger along till she comes home. Will you write me before you go hence? Any communications will be received gratefully.

Emilie—I believe.

My kind regards to the gentlemen—White—and Leavitt. Heaven's choicest blessings attend them—and evil pass by without turning either to the right hand—or the left. Very particular indeed about the left hand—as they would be a little most likely to be there. "God bless

you" to Wm Haskell—and civilized messages to all the rest of my friends.

Austin didn't get to Boston somehow or other. He spent all but the fag end of vacation reading Hume's History—and it nearly used him up.

Had a long and very interesting letter from Emily [Norcross] a few days since. She seems contented—almost happy—says she will be glad to see us all, tho.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Amherst New Year 11th/50.

PUBLICATION: L (1931) 57–61.

White and Leavitt were the business partners of Norcross. The character of Mrs. Caudle, a voluble scold, was created by Douglas William Jerrold for *Punch*, and *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures* was published in 1846. Mrs. Partington, a village Malaprop, was a character created by Benjamin P. Shillaber for a Boston newspaper in 1847. The first quotation in the second paragraph recalls *Paradise Lost*, II, 51: "My sentence is for open war"; the second quotation in the same paragraph, the conclusion of Bryant's *Thanatopsis*: "Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch/About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

To Jane Humphrey

23 January 1850

Dear Jane.

I have written you a great many letters since you left me—not the kind of letters that go in post-offices—and ride in mail-bags—but queer—little silent ones—very full of affection—and full of confidence—but wanting in proof to you—therefore not valid—somehow you will not answer them—and you *would* paper, and ink letters—I will try one of those—tho' not half so precious as the other kind. I have written *those* at night—when the rest of the world were at sleep—when only God came between us—and no one else might hear. No need of shutting the door—nor of whispering timidly—nor of fearing the ear of listeners—for night held them fast in his arms that they could not interfere—and his arms are brawny and strong. Sometimes I didn't know but you were awake—and I hoped you wrote with that spirit pen—and on sheets from out the sky. *Did* you ever—and were we together in any

of those nights? I *do* love—and remember you Jane—and have tried to convince you of it ocularly—but it is not easy to try just as we *are* at home—Vinnie away—and my two hands but *two*—not four, or five as they ought to be—and so *many* wants—and me so *very* handy—and my time of so *little* account—and my writing so *very* needless—and really I came to the conclusion that I should be a villain unparralleled if I took but an inch of time for so unholy a purpose as writing a friendly letter—for what need had I of sympathy—or very much less of affection—or less than they all—of friends—mind the house—and the food—*sweep* if the spirits were low—nothing like exercise to strengthen—and invigorate—and help away such foolishnesses—work makes one strong, and cheerful—and as for society what neighborhood so full as my own? The halt—the lame—and the blind—the old—the infirm—the bed-ridden—and superannuated—the ugly, and disagreeable—the perfectly hateful to me—all *these* to see—and be seen by—an opportunity rare for cultivating meekness—and patience—and submission—and for turning my back to this very sinful, and wicked world. Somehow or other I incline to other things—and Satan covers them up with flowers, and I reach out to pick them. The path of duty looks very ugly indeed—and the place where I want to go more amiable—a great deal—it is so much easier to do wrong than right—so much pleasanter to be evil than good, I dont wonder that good angels weep—and bad ones sing songs. It is a great while since I've seen you Jane—and really I miss you sincerely—the days would go swifter were you in the end—and the sight of your hood would lift me up certainly—I *do* wish that you could be here. The year went away so fast we had'nt time to think—had I known it would carry you with it I certainly would have thought. Only another *too late* to put with the rest—one more to reproach—and to look sadly out of large—dark eyes—and there will be more—and more if we live to help make them. It seemed so pleasant to have you—to know that I might see you—that I sank into a kind of stupor—and did'nt know—or care—or think that I could not see you always—and while I slept you faded all away—and was gone when I waked up. "Why where am I—how came I here—who put me in—who'll take me out—where's my servant—where are my friends—you hav'nt got any." The immortal Pickwick himself could'nt have been more amazed when he found himself soul—body and—spirit incarcerated in the pound than was I myself when they said *she* had

gone—gone! Gone *how*—or *where*—or *why*—who saw her go—help—hold—bind—and keep her—put her into States prison—into the House of Correction—bring out the long lashed whip—and put her feet in the stocks—and give her a number of stripes and make her repent her going! They say you are teaching in Warren—are happy—then I know you are good—for none *but* the good are happy—you are out of the way of temptation—and out of the way of the tempter—I did'nt mean to make you wicked—but I was—and am—and shall be—and I was with you so much that I could'nt help contaminate. Are you ever lonely in Warren—are you lonely without me—very lonely the last to be sure—but I want to know.

Vinnie you know is away—and that I'm very lonely is too plain for me to tell you—I am *alone*—*all* alone. She wrote that she'd heard from you—and had written you herself—did she say she was homesick? She knew that her letters to me would be *family* affairs—and she cant tell me anything at all—she dont dare to—and I'd rather she would'nt either. When I knew Vinnie must go I clung to you as the dearer than ever friend—but when the grave opened—and swallowed you both—I murmured—and thought I had a right to—I hav'nt changed my mind yet—either. I love to be surly—and muggy—and cross—then I remember you—and feel that I do a kind of justice to you—and myself—which eases my conscience wonderfully. Oh ugly time—and space—and boarding-school contemptible that tries to keep us apart—laugh now if you will—but you shall howl hereafter! Eight weeks with their bony fingers still poking me away—how I *hate* them—and would love to do them harm! Is it wicked to talk so Jane—what *can* I say that isn't? Out of a wicked heart cometh wicked words—let us sweep it out—and brush away the cob-webs—and garnish it—and make ready for the Master! There is a good deal going on just now—the two last weeks of vacation were full to the brim of fun. Austin was reading Hume's History until then—and his getting it through was the signal for general uproar. Campaign opened by a sleigh ride on a very magnificent plan to which my dear Jane would have been joyfully added—had she been in town—a party of ten from here met a party of the same number from Greenfield—at South-Deerfield the evening next New Year's—and had a frolic, comprising charades—walking around *indefinitely*—music—conversation—and supper—set in most modern style; got home at two o'clock—and felt no worse

for it the next morning—which we all thought was very remarkable. Tableaux at the President's followed next in the train—a Sliding party close upon it's heels—and several cozy sociables brought up the rear. To say nothing of a party *universale* at the house of Sydney Adams—and one *confidentiale* at Tempe Linnell's. How we miss *our friend* at all of these things! I would gladly exchange them all for one evening's talk with the friends I love—but it may not be. If every prayer was answered, there would be nothing left to pray for—we *must* “suffer—and be strong.” *Shall* we be strong—wont suffering make weaker this human—it makes stronger not *us*—but what God gave, and what he will take—mourn our bodies ever so loudly. We do not know that he is God—and *will* try to be still—tho' we really had rather complain. The Sewing Society has commenced again—and held its first meeting last week—now all the poor will be helped—the cold warmed—the warm cooled—the hungry fed—the thirsty attended to—the ragged clothed—and this suffering—tumbled down world will be helped to it's feet again—which will be quite pleasant to all. I dont attend—notwithstanding my high approbation—which must puzzle the public exceedingly. I am already set down as one of those brands almost consumed—and my hardheartedness gets me many prayers. Spencer is slowly improving—said he heard from you a little while ago—and seemed much gratified. Abby Haskell too is much better—I verily believe they will live in spite of the “angel of death.” Tolman I do not see—guess he is pining away—and cant say I blame him in view of the facts in the case. I shant tell you what ails him—for it is a *private* matter—and you ought not to know! How could you be so cruel Jane—it will certainly be the death of him—and t'will be laid at *your* door if it is. Write me soon darling!

Very sincerely yrs—

Emily E. Dickinson.

Have you ever seen Carpenter in Warren? Has he recovered yet—I saw him at the Levee—and remembered him—and I want to know about him. Abby Wood is in Athol. Her only brother is very low—and probably cannot recover. I pity the child with my whole heart—she is too young to suffer so. I had a letter—and Ralph Emerson's Poems—a beautiful copy—from Newton the other day. I should love to read you them both—they are very pleasant to me. I can write him in about three weeks—and I *shall*. Did you know that Payson had gone

to Ohio to live? I was so sorry to have him go—but everyone is going—we shall all go—and not return again before long. Kavanagh says “there will be mourning—mourning—mourning at the judgment seat of Christ”—I wonder if that is true? I had a letter from Lyman a little while since—you may read it sometime.

Two cousins of mine from South-Hadley are staying their vacation with us. I can hardly tell whether I am enjoying their visit, or not—but I rather think I am, as I dont certainly know—now do you ever tell of this—and I will certainly put you into a sleep which you cant wake up from! Abiah Root has been in Amherst—stayed only a week—but long enough for me to know her anew as a splendid girl. She is a treasure surely. She has written me since she went home—and we are going to correspond again. I have written to *Belvidere*—and young “D. D.” will feel some things I think—at any rate I intended he should—and wrote accordingly. It would have done your own heart good. All send you much love.

MANUSCRIPT: Rosenbach 1170/ 17 (2). Ink. Dated: Amherst. January 23<sup>d</sup>/50.

PUBLICATION: G. F. Whicher, *This Was a Poet . . .*, New York (1938) 89, three sentences only.

Jane Humphrey, recently preceptress at Amherst Academy (1848–1849), was now teaching at Warren. Lavinia was attending Wheaton Female Seminary at Ipswich. The cousins who had been visiting were Mary Ann and Sarah J. Dickinson of Romeo, Michigan, who attended Mount Holyoke for a year. Abby Wood's home was in Athol, but she was now living with her uncle and aunt, the Luke Sweetser, near neighbors of the Dickinsons. John Laurens Spencer (AC 1848) was now the principal of Amherst Academy. Harvey Sessions Carpenter (AC 1853) was a freshman from Warren. Albert Tolman (AC 1845) was a tutor in the college. “Belvidere” (James Parker Kimball, AC 1849) had given ED a copy of Holmes's poems (HCL), inscribed: Miss Emily E. Dickinson/ From J. P. K./“Philopena”/Amherst Jan. 18th 1849. Meanwhile evidently the friendship had cooled.

Ben Newton probably gave ED the copy of Emerson's *Poems* (1847) shortly before leaving Amherst to continue the study of law at Worcester, his native town. He was still unmarried. The cryptic sentence “I can write him in about three weeks—and I *shall*” presumably was clear to Jane Humphrey. This is probably ED's first letter to Jane after Jane's departure from Amherst, and therefore what knowledge the girls shared had derived



from conversations. The tone of the remark suggests that ED had acceded to some parental interdiction placed upon a headlong correspondence. That ED felt a deep friendship for Newton is certain. That she was in love with him is most unlikely (see letter no. 153).

ED's expression in the second paragraph, "Out of a wicked heart cometh wicked words," is a paraphrase of Luke 6.45.

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To Abiah Root

29 January 1850

Very dear Abiah.

The folks have all gone away—they thought that they left me alone, and contrived things to amuse me should they stay long, and I be lonely. Lonely indeed—they didn't look, and they couldn't have seen if they had, who should bear me company. *Three* here instead of *one*—wouldn't it scare them? A curious trio, part earthly and part spiritual two of us—the other all heaven, and no earth. *God* is sitting here, looking into my very soul to see if I think right tho'ts. Yet I am not afraid, for I try to be right and good, and he knows every one of my struggles. He looks very gloriously, and everything bright seems dull beside him, and I don't dare to look directly at him for fear I shall die. Then *you* are here—dressed in that quiet black gown and cap—that funny little cap I used to laugh at you about, and you don't appear to be thinking about anything in particular, not in one of your *breaking dish* moods I take it, you seem aware that I'm writing you, and are amused I should think at any such friendly manifestation when you are already present. *Success* however even in making a fool of one's-self isn't to be despised, so I shall persist in writing, and you may in laughing at me, if you are fully aware of the value of time as regards your immortal spirit. I can't say that I advise you to laugh, but if you are punished, and I warned you, that can be no business of mine. So I fold up my arms, and leave you to fate—may it deal very kindly with you! The trinity winds up with me, as you may have surmised, and I certainly wouldn't be at the fag end but for civility to you. This selfsacrificing spirit will be the ruin of me! I am occupied principally with a cold just now, and the dear creature *will* have so much attention that my time slips away amazingly. It has heard so much of New

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Englanders, of their kind attentions to strangers, that it's come all the way from the Alps to determine the truth of the tale—it says the half wasn't told it, and I begin to be afraid it wasn't. Only think, came all the way from that distant Switzerland to find what was the truth! Neither husband—protector—nor friend accompanied it, and so utter a state of loneliness gives friends if nothing else. You are dying of curiosity, let me arrange that pillow to make your exit easier! I stayed at home all Saturday afternoon, and treated some disagreeable people who insisted upon calling here as tolerably as I could—when evening shades began to fall, I turned upon my heel, and walked. Attracted by the gaiety visible in the street I still kept walking till a little creature pounced upon a thin shawl I wore, and commenced riding—I stopped, and begged the creature to alight, as I was fatigued already, and quite unable to assist others. It wouldn't get down, and commenced talking to itself—"cant be New England—must have made some mistake, disappointed in my reception, don't agree with accounts, Oh what a world of deception, and fraud—Marm, will [you] tell me the name of this country—it's Asia Minor, isn't it. I intended to stop in New England." By this time I was so completely exhausted that I made no farther effort to rid me of my load, and travelled home at a moderate jog, paying no attention whatever to it, got into the house, threw off both bonnet, and shawl, and out flew my tormentor, and putting both arms around my neck began to kiss me immoderately, and express so much love, it completely bewildered me. Since then it has slept in my bed, eaten from my plate, lived with me everywhere, and will tag me through life for all I know. I think I'll wake first, and get out of bed, and leave it, but early, or late, it is dressed before me, and sits on the side of the bed looking right in my face with such a comical expression it almost makes me laugh in spite of myself. I can't call it interesting, but it certainly *is* curious—has two peculiarities which would quite win your heart, a huge pocket-handkerchief, and a very red nose. The first seems so very *abundant*, it gives you the idea of independence, and prosperity in business. The last brings up the "jovial bowl, my boys," and such an association's worth the having. If it *ever* gets tired of *me*, I will forward it to *you*—you would love it for *my* sake, if not for its own, it will tell you some queer stories about me—how I sneezed so loud one night that the family thought the last trump was sounding, and climbed into the currant-bushes to get out of

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the way—how the rest of the people arrayed in long night gowns folded their arms, and were waiting—but this is a wicked story, it can tell some *better* ones. Now my dear friend, let me tell you that these last thoughts are fictions—vain imaginations to lead astray foolish young women. They are flowers of speech, they both *make*, and *tell* deliberate falsehoods, avoid them as the snake, and turn aside as from the *Bottle* snake, and I don't *think* you will be harmed. Honestly tho', a snake bite is a serious matter, and there can't be too much said, or done about it. The big serpent bites the deepest, and we get so accustomed to it's bites that we don't mind about them. "Verily I say unto you fear *him*." Wont you read some work upon snakes—I have a real anxiety for you! I love those little green ones that slide around by your shoes in the grass—and make it rustle with their elbows—they are rather my favorites on the whole, but I wouldn't influence *you* for the world! There is an air of misanthropy about the striped snake that will commend itself at once to your taste, there is no monotony about it—but we will more of this again. Something besides severe colds, and serpents, and we will try to find *that* something. It can't be a garden, can it, or a strawberry bed, which rather belongs to a garden—nor it can't be a school-house, nor an Attorney at Law. Oh dear I don't know *what* it is! Love for the absent don't *sound* like it, but try it, and see how it goes.

I miss you very much indeed, think of you at night when the world's nodding, "nidnid nodding["]—think of you in the daytime when the cares of the world, and it's toils, and it's continual vexations choke up the love for friends in some of our hearts; remember your warnings sometimes—try to do as you told me sometimes—and sometimes conclude it's no use to try; then my heart says it is, and new trial is followed by disappointment again. I wondered when you had gone why we didn't talk more—it wasn't for want of a subject, it never *could be* for *that*. Too many perhaps, such a crowd of people that nobody heard the speaker, and all went away discontented. You astounded me in the outset—perplexed me in the continuance—and wound up in a grand snarl—I shall be all my pilgrimage unravelling. Rather a dismal prospect certainly—but "it's always the darkest the hour before day," and this early sunset promises an earlier rise—a sun in splendor—and glory, flying out of it's purple nest. Wouldn't you love to see God's bird, when it first tries it's wings? If you were here I would tell

you something—*several* somethings which have happened since you went away, but time, and space, as usual, oppose themselves, and I put my treasures away till "we *two* meet again." The hope that I shall continue in love towards you—and *vica versa* will sustain me till then. If you are thinking soon to go away, and to show your face no more, just inform me—will you—I would have the "long lingering look" which you cast behind—It would be an invaluable addition to my treasures, and "keep your memory green." "Lord keep all our memories green," and help on our affection, and tie "the link that doth us bind" in a tight bow-knot that will keep it from separation, and stop us from growing old—if *that* is impossible—make old age pleasant to us—put it's arms around us kindly, and when we go home—let that home be called *Heaven*!

Your very sincere, and *wicked* friend,

Emily E Dickinson.

Abby has not come home yet—and I hav'n't written her. She must be very sad, and need all comfort from us. She will be left *alone*—wont she?

Had a letter from Vinnie after you left—it expressed great regret at not seeing you—both on her part and Jane's. They come home in seven weeks.

I hav'n't thanked you for your letter yet, but not for want of gratitude. I will do so *now* most sincerely, most heartily—gladly—and gratefully. You will write me another soon—that I may have *four right* feelings again! They don't come for the asking. I have been introducing you to me in this letter so far—we will traffick in "joys"—and "sorrows" some other day. Colds make one very carnal and the spirit is always afraid of them. You will excuse all *mistakes* in view of ignorance—all *sin* in view of "the fall," all *want* of *friendly affection* in the sight of the verse "the deepest stream the stillest runs," and other general deficiencies, on the ground of universal incapacity! Here is surely room for Charity, and heavenly visiter would'n't have come but for these faults. "No loss without a gain." I called to see your cousins an evening since—they were well, and evidently delighted to see one another—and us. Lucy spoke in high praise of visiting, of visiting Abiah more especially, and of visiting Abiah's mother, more especially still. When your letter came I had two western cousins—now at S-Hadley Sem<sup>y</sup> staying their vacation with me. They took an un-

bounded delight in a sentence I read them – and to pay for it, send you their love. Write me a letter!

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 7). Ink. Dated: Amherst. January 29. 1850.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 39–45, in part; *LL* 137–140, in part; *L* (1931) 35–40, in part, with conclusion misplaced.

Following ED's letter to Abiah of 29 October 1848 (no. 26), there had been a break in their correspondence. With this letter ED carries out the purpose she mentioned to Jane Humphrey a few days earlier, and renews it. The paraphrase "we two meet again" recalls the opening line of *Macbeth*: "When shall we three meet again?" The "long lingering look" echoes the last line of stanza 22 in Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*: "Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind." "Lord, keep my memory green" is the last line in the Christmas book, published in 1848, by Dickens: *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain*.

32

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

early 1850?

I wanted to write, and just tell you that *me*, and *my spirit* were fighting this morning. It isn't known generally, and you mustn't tell anybody.

I dreamed about you last night, and waked up putting my shawl, and hood on to go and see you, but this wicked snow-storm looked in at my window, and told me I could'nt. I hope God will forgive me, but I am very unwilling to have it storm – he is merciful to the sinning, isn't he?

I cannot wait to be with you – Oh ugly time, and space, and uglier snow-storm than all! Were you happy in Northampton? I was very lonely without you, and wanted to write you a letter *many* times, but Kate was there too, and I was afraid you would both laugh. I should be stronger if I could see you oftener – I am very puny alone.

You make me so happy, and glad, life seems worth living for, no matter for all the trials. When I see you I shall tell you more, for I know you are busy this morning.

That isn't an *empty* blank where I began – it is so full of affection that you can't see any – that's all. Will you love, and remember, *me*

[ 90 ]

when you have time from worthier ones? God keep you till I have seen you again!

Very earnestly yrs –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL. Ink. Addressed on the fold: Miss Emily E Fowler./Austin. Unpublished.

This note, in the handwriting of 1850, may have been written about the same time as the two foregoing. The "Kate" referred to was probably Catharine Hitchcock (1826–1895), daughter of Edward Hitchcock, President of Amherst College.

33

To William Cowper Dickinson

about February 1850

"Life is but a strife –  
T'is a bubble –  
T'is a dream –  
And man is but a little *boat*  
Which paddles down the stream"

MANUSCRIPT: Dickinson. Ink. Addressed: Mr William C Dickinson / Amherst – / Mass –. Unpublished. The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

Although the spirit of this verse seems removed from that of the usual valentine, it seems to have been sent as such. It is illustrated with small cuts clipped from old books and papers, one cutting taken from the *New England Primer*. After line one: a man, a woman, and a boy in a doorway, beating off dogs with a broom and sticks; after line two: two boys and a girl blowing bubbles; after line three: (1) a sleeping king (from the *Primer*), and (2) a small sailboat.

34

To George H. Gould?

February 1850

Magnum bonum, "harum scarum," zounds et zounds, et war alarum, man reformam, life perfectum, mundum changum, all things flarum?

[ 91 ]

Sir, I desire an interview; meet me at sunrise, or sunset, or the new moon — the place is immaterial. In gold, or in purple, or sackcloth — I look not upon the *raiment*. With sword, or with pen, or with plough — the weapons are less than the *wielder*. In coach, or in wagon, or walking, the *equipage* far from the *man*. With soul, or spirit, or body, they are all alike to me. With host or alone, in sunshine or storm, in heaven or earth, *some* how or *no* how — I propose, sir, to see you.

And not to *see* merely, but a chat, sir, or a tete-a-tete, a confab, a mingling of opposite minds is what I propose to have. I feel sir that we shall agree. We will be David and Jonathan, or Damon and Pythias, or what is better than either, the United States of America. We will talk over what we have learned in our geographies, and listened to from the pulpit, the press and the Sabbath School.

This is strong language sir, but none the less true. So hurrah for North Carolina, since we are on this point.

Our friendship sir, shall endure till sun and moon shall wane no more, till stars shall set, and victims rise to grace the final sacrifice. We'll be instant, in season, out of season, minister, take care of, cherish, sooth, watch, wait, doubt, refrain, reform, elevate, instruct. All choice spirits however distant are ours, ours theirs; there is a thrill of sympathy — a circulation of mutuality — *cognitionem inter nos*! I am Judith the heroine of the Apocrypha, and you the orator of Ephesus.

That's what they call a metaphor in our country. Don't be afraid of it, sir, it won't bite. If it was my *Carlo* now! The Dog is the noblest work of Art, sir. I may safely say the noblest — his mistress's rights he doth defend — although it bring him to his end — although to death it doth him send!

But the world is sleeping in ignorance and error, sir, and we must be crowing cocks, and singing larks, and a rising sun to awake her; or else we'll pull society up to the roots, and plant it in a different place. We'll build Alms-houses, and transcendental State prisons, and scaffolds — we will blow out the sun, and the moon, and encourage invention. Alpha shall kiss Omega — we will ride up the hill of glory — Hallelujah, all hail!

Yours, truly,  
C.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *The Indicator* (Amherst College), II, 7, February 1850.

This valentine letter, dated "Valentine Eve," is typical of the nonsense ED could evoke for such occasions. Some of the expressions, such as "magnum bonum, harum scarum" she also used in her letter (no. 29) to Joel Norcross. *The Indicator* was published by a group of students among whom was George H. Gould, Austin's good friend. The preparation of the "Editor's Corner," in which the letter appears, was for this issue in the hands of Henry Shipley. It was preceded by a comment in which the editor says: "I wish I knew who the author is. I think she must have some spell, by which she quickens the imagination, and causes the high blood 'run frolic through the veins.'" On Carlo, see letters no. 194 and 314.

To Jane Humphrey

3 April 1850

Jane, dear Jane.

The voice of *love* I heeded, tho' *seeming* not to; the voice of affliction is louder, more earnest, and needs it's friends, and they know this need, and put on their wings of affection, and fly towards the lone one, and sing, sing sad music, but there's something sustaining in it. Your *first* words found me far out in the world, crowding, and hurrying, and busying, the last ones have found me there, but I have struggled with some success, and am free to be with you a little. Trouble is with you, and trial, and your spirit is sorely cumbered, and I can hardly dare to talk, *earthly* things seem faded, and fallen; could I speak with a right of Heaven, and the Savior, and "rest for the weary" I know I could bring strength to you, and could lift you above this cumbering; but I can tell you how dearly I love you, if *this* will make you happier. I have been much with you since you first wrote me, *always* with you, but *more* since *then*, for the last few days you have been *very* near, *very* dear *indeed*, and I have wished, and prayed to *see* you, and to *hear* you, and to feel your warm heart beating near me, what music in such quiet ticking! You mourn Jennie, how does it *seem* to mourn, you *watch*, and the lamp is waning, where is your spirit resting, have you any dear friend to be near you, and to tell you of peace? It would be very precious to *me* to do so, to be a strong arm you might lean on when you looked all around, and could find none, this is none of it permitted now, and I think, and strive, and attempt, but come no nearer the end.



Can I console so far off, wont the comfort waste in conveying, and be *not*, when my letter gets there? How long had your father been sick, and why hav'nt you told me before, we have *certainly* loved one another! How very much you have suffered, and I hav'nt known anything about it, but supposed you away in Warren, teaching, and thinking of home, and *sometimes* of us, and a place we wish *was* your home. I have dreamed of you, and talked of you, and wished for you, and have almost thought I should see you, it has seemed that some way would help me, and a providence would bring you, and yet you have not come, and I am so very tired of waiting. Some one said you would come in vacation, and I looked towards it very eagerly, made my treasures ready against it, and prepared my mind, and heart to welcome you in so kindly, and disappointment put a great cloud in my sky, and it's so high I cannot reach it, and it's doing a deal of harm. How lonely this world is growing, something so desolate creeps over the spirit and we dont know it's name, and it wont go away, either Heaven is seeming greater, or Earth a great deal more small, or God is more "Our Father," and we feel our need increased. Christ is calling everyone here, all my companions have answered, even my darling Vinnie believes she loves, and trusts him, and I am standing alone in rebellion, and growing very careless. Abby, Mary, Jane, and farthest of all my Vinnie have been seeking, and they all believe they have found; I cant tell you *what* they have found, but *they* think it is something precious. I wonder if it is? How strange is this sanctification, that works such a marvellous change, that sows in such corruption, and rises in golden glory, that brings Christ down, and shews him, and lets him select his friends! In the day time it seems like Sundays, and I wait for the bell to ring, and at evening a great deal stranger, the "still small voice" grows earnest and rings, and returns, and lingers, and the faces of good men shine, and bright halos come around them; and the eyes of the disobedient look down, and become ashamed. It *certainly* comes from God — and I think to receive it is blessed — not that I know it from *me*, but from those on whom *change* has passed. They seem so very tranquil, and their voices are kind, and gentle, and the tears fill their eyes so often, I really think I envy them. You know all about John Sanford, and Thurston, and all the rest, and I cant say more about it. You must pray when the rest are sleeping, that the hand may be held to me, and I may be led away.

How long does it seem since you left me, has the time been fleet, or lagging — been filled with hope, and the future, or waste, and a weary wilderness — and no one who knew the road? I would whisper to you in the evening of many, and curious things — and by the lamps eternal read your thoughts and response in your face, and find what you thought about me, and what I have done, and am doing; I know you would be surprised, whether in pleasure, or disappointment it doesn't become me to say — I have dared to do strange things — bold things, and have asked no advice from any — I have heeded beautiful tempters, yet do not think I am wrong. Oh I have needed my trusty Jane — my friend encourager, and sincere counsellor, my rock, and strong assister! I could make you tremble for me, and be very much afraid, and wonder how things would end — Oh Jennie, it would relieve me to tell you all, to sit down at your feet, and look in your eyes, and confess what *you only* shall know, an experience bitter, and sweet, but the sweet did so beguile me — and life has had an aim, and the world has been too precious for your poor — and striving sister! The winter was all one dream, and the spring has not yet waked me, I would *always* sleep, and dream, and it never should turn to morning, so long as night is so blessed. What do you weave from all these threads, for I know you hav'nt been idle the while I've been speaking to you, bring it nearer the window, and I will see, it's all wrong unless it has one gold thread in it, a long, big shining fibre which hides the others — and which will fade away into Heaven while you hold it, and from there come back to me. I hope belief is not wicked, and assurance, and perfect trust — and a kind of a twilight feeling before the moon is seen — I hope human nature has truth in it — Oh I pray it may not deceive — confide — cherish, have a great faith in — do you dream from all this what I mean? Nobody *thinks* of the joy, nobody *guesses* it, to all appearance old things are engrossing, and new ones are not revealed, but there *now* is nothing old, things are budding, and springing, and singing, and you rather think you are in a green grove, and it's branches that go, and come. I shall see you *sometime* darling, and that sometime *may* not be distant, try to grow fast, and live really, and endure, and wait in patience — and reward *cannot* be distant. Be strong Jennie in remembrance, dont let "bygones be bygones" — love what you are taken from, and cherish us tho, so dim. Dont put us in narrow graves — we shall *certainly rise* if you do, and scare you most prodi-



giously, and carry you off perhaps! "This is the end of earth."

Very affectionately your friend  
Emily E Dickinson.

Vinnie and Jane send much love, and want to know whether you received two long letters from them a great while ago.

Abby says she is waiting patiently. She is well, and sends you much love; Mother, and Austin unite in the same.

Mrs Brewster has lost a sister, her beautiful sister Celia who went away on a mission; she is deeply, and greatly afflicted, and hardly knows how to submit—she cherished that sister, and loved her, and she cannot resign her so soon. Her remains will be brought to Blandford as soon as the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, and as she is preserved in spirit, they hope she will still be natural, and they can part with her then more willingly.

Mr Spencer is very comfortable—I have faith that the spring will revive him, and give him some newness of life, and strength. No news from our "Theologian" Jennie, he must have "made way with himself"—I really don't care if he *has*. I am hushed as the night when I write *her*, and of *him* I hear not a *tiding*. I only prayed for *pride*—I have received yet more; indifference, and he may go "where he listeth," and never a bit care I. Something else has helped me forget *that*, a something surer, and higher, and I sometimes laugh in my sleeve. Don't betray me Jennie—but love, and remember, and write me, and I shall one day meet you.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (JH 1). Ink. Dated: Amherst. April 3d. 1850. Unpublished.

Jane Humphrey had been compelled to resign her teaching position at Warren and return home because of the serious illness of her father, who died on the day this letter was written (see letter no. 36). Mrs. Brewster was the wife of John Milton Brewster, who practiced medicine at Amherst from 1843 until 1853. She herself died in the following year. Her sister, Celia Wright, a girl of nineteen, married John C. Strong in 1846, and accompanied him on his mission among the Choctaw Indians (1847–1849). Benjamin E. Thurston (AC 1852) later went West into business. "Our theologian" was James P. Kimball, whom ED finds it difficult to warm toward (see letter no. 30); and the person referred to as "her" was prob-

ably his sister Maria. The Jane mentioned in the sentence following the signature was Vinnie's friend Jane Hitchcock.

To Abiah Root

7 and 17 May 1850

Dear Remembered.

The circumstances under which I write you this morning are at once glorious, afflicting, and beneficial—glorious in *ends*, afflicting in *means*, and *beneficial* I trust in *both*. Twin loaves of bread have just been born into the world under my auspices—fine children—the image of their *mother*—and *here* my dear friend is the *glory*.

On the lounge asleep, lies my sick mother, suffering intensely from Acute Neuralgia—except at a moment like this, when kind sleep draws near, and beguiles her, *here* is the *affliction*.

I need not draw the *beneficial* inference—the good I myself derive, the winning the spirit of patience the genial house-keeping influence stealing over my mind, and soul, you know all these things I would say, and will seem to suppose they are *written*, when indeed they are only *thought*. On Sunday my mother was taken, had been perfectly well before, and could remember no possible imprudence which should have induced the disease, everything has been done, and tho' we think her gradually throwing it off, she still has much suffering. I have always neglected the culinary arts, but attend to them now from necessity, and from a desire to make everything pleasant for father, and Austin. Sickness makes desolation, and "the day is dark, and dreary," but health will come back I hope, and light hearts, and smiling faces. We are sick hardly ever at home, and don't know what to do when it comes, wrinkle our little brows, and stamp our little feet, and our tiny souls get angry, and command it to go away. Mrs *Brown* will be glad to see it, old-ladies *expect* to die, as for *us*, the young, and active, with all longings "for the strife," we to "perish by the road-side, weary with the march of life" no—no my dear "Father Mortality," get out of our way if you please, we will call if we ever want you, Good-morning Sir, ah Good-morning! When I am not at work in the kitchen, I sit by the side of mother, provide for her little wants—and try to cheer, and encourage her. I ought to be glad, and grateful that I *can* do anything now, but I do feel so very lonely, and so anxious to have her cured. I

hav'nt repined but *once*, and you shall know all the why. While I washed the dishes at noon in that little "sink-room" of our's, I heard a well-known rap, and a friend I love so dearly came and asked me to ride in the woods, the sweet-still woods, and I wanted to exceedingly—I told him I could not go, and he said he was disappointed—he wanted me very much—then the tears came into my eyes, tho' I tried to choke them back, and he said I *could*, and *should* go, and it seemed to me unjust. Oh I struggled with great temptation, and it cost me much of denial, but I think in the end I conquered, not a glorious victory Abiah, where you hear the rolling drum, but a kind of a helpless victory, where triumph would come of itself, faintest music, weary soldiers, nor a waving flag, nor a long-loud shout. I had read of Christ's temptations, and how they were like our own, only he didn't sin; I wondered if *one* was like mine, and whether it made him angry—I couldn't make up my mind; do you think he ever did?

I went cheerfully round my work, humming a little air till mother had gone to sleep, then cried with all my might, seemed to think I was much abused, that this wicked world was unworthy such devoted, and terrible sufferings, and came to my various senses in great dudgeon at life, and time, and love for affliction, and anguish.

What shall we do my darling, when trial grows more, and more, when the dim, lone light expires, and it's dark, so very dark, and we wander, and know not where, and cannot get out of the forest—whose is the hand to help us, and to lead, and forever guide us, they talk of a "Jesus of Nazareth," will you tell me if it be he?

I presume you have heard from Abby, and know what she now believes—she makes a sweet, girl christian, religion makes her face quite different, calmer, but full of radiance, holy, yet very joyful. She talks of herself quite freely, seems to love Lord Christ most dearly, and to wonder, and be bewildered, at the life she has always led. It all looks black, and distant, and God, and Heaven are near, she is certainly very much changed.

She has told you about things here, how the "still small voice" is calling, and how the people are listening, and believing, and truly obeying—how the place is very solemn, and sacred, and the bad ones slink away, and are sorrowful—not at their wicked lives—but at this strange time, great change. (I am one of the lingering *bad* ones, and so do I slink away, and pause, and ponder, and ponder, and pause, and

do work without knowing why—not surely for *this* brief world, and more sure it is not for Heaven—and I ask what this message *means* that they ask for so very eagerly, *you* know of this depth, and fulness, will you try to tell me about it?

It's *Friday* my dear Abiah, and that in another week, yet my mission is unfulfilled—and you so sadly neglected, and don't know the reason why. Where do you think I've strayed, and from what new errand returned? I have come from "*to* and *fro*, and walking up, and down" the same place that Satan hailed from, when God asked him where he'd been, but not to illustrate further I tell you I have been dreaming, dreaming a *golden* dream, with eyes all the while wide open, and I guess it's almost morning, and besides I have been at work, providing the "food that perisheth," scaring the timorous dust, and being obedient, and kind. I call it kind obedience in the books the Shadows write in, it may have another name. I am yet the Queen of the court, if regalia be dust, and dirt, have three loyal subjects, whom I'd rather relieve from service. Mother is still an invalid tho' a partially restored one—Father and Austin still clamor for food, and I, like a martyr am feeding them. Would'nt you love to see me in these bonds of great despair, looking around my kitchen, and praying for kind deliverance, and declaring by "Omar's beard" I never was in such plight. My kitchen I think I called it, God forbid that it was, or shall be my own—God keep me from what they call *households*, except that bright one of "faith"!

Don't be afraid of my imprecations, they never did anyone harm, and they make me feel so cool, and and [*sic*] so very much more comfortable!

Where are you now Abiah, where are your thoughts, and aspirings, where are your young affections, not with the *boots*, and *whiskers*; any with *me* ungrateful, any tho' drooping, dying? I presume you are loving your mother, and loving the stranger, and wanderer, visiting the poor, and afflicted, and reaping whole fields of blessings. Save me a *little* sheaf—only a very little one! Remember, and care for me sometimes, and scatter a fragrant flower in this wilderness life of mine by writing me, and by not forgetting, and by lingering longer in prayer, that the Father may bless one more!

Your aff friend,  
Emily.

It's a great while since I've seen your cousins, they were all very well when I did. When will you come again – Speedily, will you?

Vinnie is still at school, and I sit by my lonely window, and give bright tears to her memory. Tears are my angels now.

Do you hear from our dear Jennie Humphrey, do you know who's staying now? I feel impatiently, *very* it's so long since I've heard about her. When her father was sick she wrote me, and as soon as I could I replied; I afterwards saw his death, the day that my letter reached her. She must be bereaved indeed, and I wish I could go, and console her. She has the "Great Spirit" tho', and perhaps she doesn't need me. Do you know how she bears her trial. She is a very dear friend to me, and all of these things I think of.

What a beautiful mourner is her sister, looking so crushed, and heart-broken, yet never complaining, or murmuring, and waiting herself so patiently! She reminds me of suffering Christ, bowed down with her weight of agony, yet smiling at terrible will. "Where the weary are at rest" these mourners all make me think of – in the sweet still grave. When shall it call us?

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 8). Ink. Dated: Amherst. May 7th/50.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 46–50, in part; *LL* 141–145, in part; *L* (1931) 40–43, in part, with part misplaced on pages 28–29.

Lavinia was still in school at Ipswich. The religious revival was of such proportions that on June 8 the *Springfield Republican* could report that it was still in progress. Edward Dickinson made confession of his faith and joined the church on 11 August. In the third paragraph ED quotes from Longfellow's "The Rainy Day," a poem to which she alludes no fewer than six times during these early years (see letters no. 54, 69, 74, 88, 98). In the eighth paragraph the quotation is from Longfellow's "Footsteps of Angels."

37

To Austin Dickinson

27 October 1850

Suppose "Topknot" should come down, and speak to his brothers, and sisters, or bind up the broken hearts of divers deserted friends, suppose he should doff his crown, and lay down his lofty sceptre, and once more a patient child receive reproof, and correction, salute the insulted rod, and bow to the common Lord!

An affection of *nin*[e]teen years for the most ungrateful of brothers

[ 100 ]

jogs now and then at my elbow, and calls for paper and pen. Permit me to tie your shoe, to run like a dog behind you. I can bark, see here! Bow wow! Now if that isn't fine I don't know! Permit me to be a stick, to show how I will not beat you, a stone, how I will not fling, mosquito, I will not sting. Permit me to be a fowl, which Bettie shall dress for dinner, a bantam, a fine, fat hen. I will crow in my grave if you will, Chanticleer being still, tho' sleeping. Herein I "deign to condescend to stoop so low," what a high hill between me, and thee, a hill, upon my word, it is a *mountain*, I dare not climb. Let's call it "Alp," or "Ande," or yet the "Ascension Mount." I have it! – you shall be "Jove" a sitting on great "Olympus," a whittling the lightnings out, and hurling at your relations. Oh, "Jupiter"! fie! for shame! *Kings* sometimes have fathers and mothers. Father and I are going to have a Cattle Show Wednesday. School masters and Monkeys half price. I guess you had better "come down." They've appointed *you* joint committee on the "Beast with the seven horns." If time, and ability fail you, they'll omit the remaining horn. There's an old hand they call "Revelation." I dare say he will give you a lift! Bowdoin is pretty well, except now and on ailing, he *may* hold on a good while yet, you know that life is *unsartin*!

To the Boy of brass buttons, clasped hands, and fervent expression, send greetings.

That Miss Field may abstain from *meadow*, nor ever be found of *Groves*, is the prayer of your anxious friend.

"Serve God, and fear the King"! Exit Sue!!!

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday evening. Envelope addressed: Austin Dickinson./Sunderland./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst MS. Oct. 28.

PUBLISHED: *Home* 109–110.

Austin was graduated from Amherst College in August 1850, and in September went to teach at Sunderland, a few miles north of Amherst. He had already become interested in Susan Gilbert, whose "exit" ED predicts. His letters to Sue from Sunderland are extant (HCL).

38

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

about December 1850

Were it not for the *weather* Susie – my little, unwelcome face would come peering in today – I should steal a kiss from the sister –

[ 101 ]



the darling Rover returned—'Thank the wintry wind my dear one, that spares such daring intrusion! Dear Susie—happy Susie—I rejoice in all *your* joy—sustained by that dear sister you will never again be lonely. Don't forget all the little friends who have tried so hard to *be* sisters, when indeed you *were* alone!

You do not hear the wind blow on this inclement day, when the *world* is shrugging its shoulders; your little "Columbarium is lined with warmth and softness," there is no "silence" there—so you differ from bonnie "Alice." I *miss one* angel face in the little world of sisters—dear Mary—*sainted* Mary—Remember lonely one—tho, *she* comes not to us, *we* shall return to *her*! My love to *both* your sisters—and I want so much to see Matty.

Very aff yours,

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 131). Ink. Dated: Thursday noon.

PUBLICATION: FF 186–187.

Susan Gilbert's sister Mary, married for less than a year to Samuel J. Learned, died on 14 July 1850. The other unmarried sister, Martha, who had been in Michigan, joined Sue in December at the home of the eldest sister Harriet (Mrs. William Cutler), in Amherst. The "Alice" here alluded to is Alice Archer in Longfellow's *Kavanagh*, whose room is described as "that columbarium lined with warmth, and softness, and silence."

To Abiah Root

late 1850

I write Abiah to-night, because it is cool and quiet, and I can forget the toil and care of the feverish day, and then I am *selfish* too, because I am feeling lonely; some of my friends are gone, and some of my friends are sleeping—sleeping the churchyard sleep—the hour of evening is sad—it was once my study hour—my master has gone to rest, and the open leaf of the book, and the scholar at school *alone*, make the tears come, and I cannot brush them away; I would not if I could, for they are the only tribute I can pay the departed Humphrey.

*You* have stood by the grave before; I have walked there sweet summer evenings and read the names on the stones, and wondered who would come and give me the same memorial; but I never have

laid my friends there, and forgot that they too must die; this is my first affliction, and indeed 'tis hard to bear it. To those bereaved so often that home is no more here, and whose communion with friends is had only in prayers, there must be much to hope for, but when the unreconciled spirit has nothing left but God, that spirit is lone indeed. I don't think there will be any sunshine, or any singing-birds in the spring that's coming. I shall look for an early grave then, when the grass is growing green; I shall love to call the bird there if it has gentle music, and the meekest-eyed wild flowers, and the low, plaintive insect. I *low precious* the grave, Abiah, when aught that we love is laid there, and affection would fain go too, if that the lost were lonely! I will try not to say any more—my rebellious thoughts are many, and the friend I love and trust in has much *now* to forgive. I wish I were somebody else—I would pray the prayer of the "Pharisee," but I am a poor little "Publican." "Son of David," look down on me!

'Twas a great while ago when you wrote me, I remember the leaves were falling—and *now* there are falling snows; who maketh the two to differ—are not leaves the brethren of snows?

Then it *can't* be a great while since then, though I verily thought it *was*; we are not so young as we once were, and time seems to be growing long. I dream of being a grandame, and banding my silver hairs, and I seem to be quite submissive to the thought of growing old; no doubt you ride rocking-horses in your present as in young sleeps—quite a pretty contrast indeed, of me braiding my own gray hairs, and my friend at play with her childhood, a pair of decayed old ladies! Where *are* you, my *antique* friend, or my very dear and young one—just as you please to please—it *may* seem quite a presumption that I address you at all, knowing not if you habit here, or if my "bird has flown" in which world her wing is folded. When I think of the friends I love, and the little while we may dwell here, and then "we go away," I have a yearning feeling, a desire eager and anxious lest any be stolen away, so that I cannot behold them. I would have you here, all here, where I can *see* you, and *hear* you, and where I can say "Oh, no," if the "Son of Man" ever "cometh"!

It is not enough, now and then, at long and uncertain intervals to hear you're alive and well. I do not care for the body, I love the timid soul, the blushing, shrinking soul; it hides, for it is afraid, and the bold obtrusive body—Pray, marm, did you call *me*? We are very



small, Abiah – I think we grow still smaller – this tiny, insect life the portal to another; it seems strange – strange indeed. I'm afraid we are all unworthy, yet we shall "enter in."

I can think of no other way than for you, my dear girl, to come here – we are growing away from each other, and talk even now like strangers. To forget the "meum and teum," *dearest* friends must meet sometimes, and then comes the "bond of the spirit" which, if I am correct, is "unity."

. . . You are growing wiser than I am, and nipping in the bud fancies which I let blossom – perchance to bear no fruit, or if plucked, I may find it bitter. (The shore is safer, Abiah, but I love to buffet the sea – I can count the bitter wrecks here in these pleasant waters, and hear the murmuring winds, but oh, I love the danger!) You are learning control and firmness. Christ Jesus will love you more. I'm afraid he don't love me *any*! . . . Write when you *will*, my friend, and forget all amiss herein, for as these few imperfect words to the full communion of spirits, so this small giddy life to the *better*, the life eternal, and that *we* may live this life, and be filled with this true communion, I shall not cease to pray.

#### E.

Abby has been to see you, and you had the happiest time. I know how you talked, and wa[l]ked, and I saw the weary eyelids, drooping, fainting, falling. Oh you are both asleep, and your hand is fast in Abby's. I stand by the fond young bedside, and think of "Babes in the Wood" – large babes – the ones we hear of were *small* ones – I seem to myself a robin covering you with leaves – the Babies we *were* are buried, and their shadows are plodding on. Abby is better now – she has just made another visit – a kind of friendly tour among her kith and kin. She seems better in mind and body – by which I mean stronger physically, and more cheerful in mind. I wonder that Abby's headaches do not depress her more – she endures and bears like a martyr.

I see but little of Abby; she cannot come to see me, and I walk so far not often, and perhaps it's all right and best. Our lots fall in different places; mayhap we might disagree. We take different views of life, our thoughts would not dwell together as they used to when we were young – how long ago that seems! She is more of a woman than I am, for I love so to be a child – Abby is holier than me – she

does more good in her lifetime than ever I shall in mine – she goes among the poor, she shuts the eye of the dying – she will be had in memorial when I am gone and forgotten. Do not think we are aught than friends – though the "silver cord *be* loosed" the "golden bowl" is *not* broken. I have talked thus freely of Abby because we three were friends, because I trust we three *are* friends, and shall meet in bliss together, because the golden links, though dimmed, are no less golden, and I love to hold them up, and see them gleam in the sunshine; you and I, too, are more alike than Abby and I are sometimes, and the name of each is dear and is cherished by the other.

Won't you say what you think of Abby – I mean of her heart and mind – when you write me. I think it is a license which friend may take with friend, without at all detracting from aught we like or love. And tell me of *some one else* – what *she* is thinking and doing, and whether she still remembers the loves of "long ago," and sighs as she remembers, lest there be no more as true – "sad times, sweet times, two bairns at school, but a' one heart" – *three* bairns, and the tale had been truer.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. See note 3 in "Notes on the Present Text." All of the letter above the signature has been published. The final two paragraphs below the signature (which directly follow the paragraph which precedes them) were published in *Letters* (1931) 49–50, and by mistake separated from the rest of the letter. The first paragraph below the signature is unpublished.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 50–53; *L* (1931) 44–46, dated (presumably by ED): Tuesday Evening. It is said to have been postmarked 2 January. The letter seems to have been written on 31 December 1850.

Leonard Humphrey died, 13 November 1850, at his home in North Weymouth. Abby Wood had been greatly affected during the religious revival of the previous summer, and joined the church in August.

IV

LETTERS

40-176

[ 1851-1854 ]

*" . . . we do not have much poetry,  
father having made up his mind  
that its pretty much all real life."*

The close relationship between Emily Dickinson and her brother Austin is clearly shown, both in the great number of letters she wrote to him when he was away, and in the fact that he preserved so many of them. In the course of these years, while Austin was teaching in Boston and later attending Harvard Law School, the daily intimacy of home life was constantly kept before him in her frequent letters.

It was at this time, also, that Austin's courtship of Susan Gilbert was taking shape, culminating in their publicly acknowledged engagement by the end of 1853. Emily's intimacy with Sue grew with Sue's closer tie to Austin. Fond as she still was of the girls with whom she had been intimate in earlier years, Emily's feeling for Sue took precedence over other friendships, and her letters during Sue's absences were as much a part of her daily life as were those to Austin.

The letters to these two close companions dominate the correspondence of the period, but her feeling for others was not excluded. She enjoyed exchanges of books and thoughts with Henry Vaughan Emmons during his undergraduate years. And her cousin, John L. Graves, who introduced Emmons to her, she counted as a friend of her own.

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

about 1851

I'm so afraid you'll forget me dear Emily—through these cold winter days, when I cannot come to see you, that I cannot forbear writing the least little bit of a note—to put you in mind of me; perhaps it will make you laugh—it may be foolish in me but I love you so well sometimes—not that I do not *always*—but more dearly sometimes—and with such a desire to see you that I find myself addressing you almost ere I'm aware. When I am as old as you and have had so many friends, perhaps they wont seem so precious, and then I shant write any more little "billet doux" like these, but you will forgive me *now*, because I cant find many so dear to me as you—then I know I cant have you always—some day a "brave dragoon" will be stealing you away and I will have farther to go to discover you *at all*—so I shall recollect all these sweet opportunities and feel so sorry if I did'nt improve them. I wish I had something new, or very happy, to tell you, which would fill that lofty kitchen with sunshine all day long, but there *is* nothing new—neither indeed there *can* be—for things have got so old; but something happy there *is* if the remembrance of friends is always sweet and joyful. Solve this little problem, dear Emily, if you possibly can: You have "so many" friends—you know how *very* many—then if all of them love you *half* so well as me, say—how much will it make?

I fancy I catch you *ciphering* on the funniest little slate, with the airiest little pencil—I will not interrupt you—

Dear Emilie—

Goodbye!

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL. Ink. Dated: Thursday morning. Addressed on the fold: Miss Emily E Fowler/by Vinnie,

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 136-137, in part; L (1931) 136, in part.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. This is the second known letter (see no. 32) written to Emily Fowler, who was one of ED's earliest friends. ED wrote several more over the years, an especially large number



in 1853, the year of Emily Fowler's marriage. But the quality of disembodiment, uncharacteristic of most letters, is peculiarly evident in those to Emily Fowler, who was more than four years older than ED.

41

To Elbridge G. Bowdoin

February 1851

I weave for the Lamp of *Evening*—but fairer colors than *mine* are twined while stars are shining.

I know of a shuttle swift—I know of a fairy gift—mat for the “Lamp of *Life*”—the little Bachelor's wife!

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: 1851. Addressed: Mr. Bowdoin./ Present.

PUBLICATION: L (1931) 138.

This valentine seems to have accompanied a lamp mat made by ED.

42

To Austin Dickinson

8 June 1851

It might not come amiss dear Austin to have a tidings or two concerning our state and feelings, particularly when we remember that “Jamie is gone awa.”

Our state is pretty comfortable, and our feelings are *somewhat solemn* which we account for satisfactorily by calling to mind the fact that it is the “Sabbath Day.” Whether a certain passenger in a certain yesterday's stage has any sombre effect on our once merry household, or the reverse “I dinna choose to tell,” but be the case as it may, we are rather a crestfallen company to make the *best* of us, and what with the sighing wind, the sobbing rain, and the whining of nature *generally*, we can hardly contain ourselves, and I only hope and trust that your this evening's lot is cast in far more cheery places than the ones you leave behind.

We are enjoying this evening what is called a “northeast storm”—a little north of east, in case you are pretty definite. Father thinks “it's amazin raw,” and I'm half disposed to think that he's in the right about it, tho' I keep pretty dark, and dont say much about it! Vinnie

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is at the instrument, humming a pensive air concerning a young lady who thought she was “almost there.” Vinnie seems much grieved, and I really suppose I ought to betake myself to weeping; I'm pretty sure that I *shall* if she dont abate her singing.

Father's just get home from meeting and Mr Boltwood's, found the last quite comfortable, and the first not quite so well.

Mother is warming her feet, which she assures me confidently are “just as cold as ice.” I tell her I fear there is danger of icification, or ossification—I dont know certainly which! Father is reading the Bible—I take it for *consolation*, judging from outward things. He and mother take great delight in dwelling upon your character, and reviewing your many virtues, and Father's prayers for you at our morning devotions are enough to break one's heart—it is really very touching; surely “our blessings brighten” the farther off they fly! Mother wipes her eyes with the end of her linen apron, and consoles herself by thinking of several future places “where congregations ne'er break up,” and Austins have no end! This being a favorite sentiment with you, I trust it will find a response in all patriotic bosoms. There has not been much stirring since when you went away—I should venture to say *prudently* that matters had come to a stand—unless something new “turns up” I cannot see anything to prevent a *quiet season*. Father takes care of the doors, and mother of the windows, and Vinnie and I are secure against all outward attacks. If we can get our *hearts “under”* I dont have much to fear—I've got all but *three* feelings down, if I can only keep them!

Tutor Howland was here *as usual*, during the afternoon—after tea I went to see Sue—had a nice little visit with her—then went to see Emily Fowler, and arrived home at 9—found Father in great agitation at my protracted stay—and mother and Vinnie in tears, for fear that he would kill me.

Sue and Martha expressed their sorrow that you had gone away, and are going to write a postscript in the next letter I send.

Emily F[owler] talked of you with her usual deal of praise. The girls all send their love. Mother wants me to say that if you like *Aunt L's Bonnet*, and can find one for *her just like it*, that “Barkis is very willin.” Vinnie sends her love, and says she is “pretty comfortable.” I shall think of you tomorrow with four and twenty Irish boys—all in a row! I miss you very much. I put on my bonnet tonight, opened

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the gate very desperately, and for a little while, the suspense was terrible—I think I was held in check by some invisible agent, for I returned to the house without having done any harm!

If I had'nt been afraid that you would "poke fun" at my feelings, I had written a *sincere* letter, but since the "world is hollow, and Dollie is stuffed with sawdust," I really do not think we had better expose our feelings. Write soon to *me*, they all send love to you and all the folks—love to Lizzie if there. Vinnie has commenced snoring.

Your dear Sister

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday evening.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 75-76, in part; *LL* 149-151, in part; *L* (1931) 72-74, in part; *Home* 128-129, entire.

Austin left home on Saturday, 7 June 1851, to begin a year's engagement as teacher in the boys' section of the Endicott School in the North End of Boston, settled largely by Irish immigrants who had fled the potato famine of 1847. His uncle Loring Norcross was a member of the school committee. At first he lived with the Norcrosses, but shortly moved to a boarding house (see letter no. 43), though his mailing address continued to be through the Norcrosses.

The quotation "where congregations ne'er break up" is from the familiar hymn "Jerusalem! My happy home!" The William Burkitt version (1693) first introduced the word "congregations" at the end of the second stanza: "Where congregations ne'er break up,/And Sabbaths have no end."

43

To Austin Dickinson

15 June 1851

From what you say Dear Austin I am forced to conclude that you never received *my letter* which was mailed for Boston *Monday*, but *two days* after you left—I don't know where it went to, Father wrote on the outside, and to care of Uncle Loring, and waiting from day to day and receiving no reply, I naturally grew rather crusty and resolved to reserve my mss for youths more worthy of them; this will account for the fact that you heard nothing by Bowdoin. In neither of your letters, for which I heartily thank you, have you made any mention

of my departed letter—Bowdoin *thinks* you told him you had not heard from home, and quite surprised at it, and grieved to have you think you were forgotten *so* quick, I will try the post again, if I can't be more successful. I'm glad you are so well pleased, I am glad you are *not* delighted, I would not that *foreign* places should wear the smile of home. We are quite alarmed for the *boys*, hope you won't *kill*, or *pack away* any of em, so near Dr. Webster's bones t'ant strange you have had temptations! You would not take it amiss if I should say we *laughed some* when each of your letters came—your respected parents were *overwhelmed* with glee, and as for the *young ladies* they gave a smile or so by way of recognizing your *descriptive* merits. Father remarks quite briefly that he "thinks they have found their master," mother bites her lips, and fears you "will be *rash* with them" and Vinnie and I say masses for poor Irish boys souls. So far as I am concerned I should like to have you kill some—there are so many now, there is no room for the Americans, and I can't think of a death that would be more after my mind than *scientific destruction*, *scholastic dissolution*, there's something lofty in it, it smacks of *going up*! Won't you please to state the *name* of the boy that turned the faintest, as I like to get such *facts* to set down in my *journal*, also anything else that's *startling* which you may chance to know—I don't think deaths or murders can ever come amiss in a young woman's journal—the country's *still* just now, and the severities alluded to will have a salutary influence in waking the people up—speaking of *getting up*, how early are *metropolitans* expected to wake up, *especially* young men—*more especially schoolmasters*? I miss "my department" mornings—I lay it quite to heart that I've no one to wake up. Your room looks lonely enough—I do not love to go in there—whenever I pass thro' I find I 'gin to whistle, as we read that little boys are wont to do in the graveyard. I am going to set out *Crickets* as soon as I find time that they by their shrill singing shall help disperse the gloom—will they grow if I *transplant* them?

You importune me for *news*, I am very sorry to say "Vanity of vanities" there's no such thing as news—it is almost time for the cholera, and *then* things will take a start!

We have had a man to take tea, a Mr Marsh by name—he went to school with Father.

I think him a "man of cares" tho' I know nothing concerning him—

another important item, so far as I can judge—I think he's for "law and order." Susie and Martha come often. Sue was here on Friday, for all afternoon yesterday—I gave the *manslaughter* extract to the infinite fun of Martha! They miss you very much—they send their "united loves." Vinnie rode with Howland yesterday, and Emily Fowler and [William Cowper] Dickinson also, at the same time—had a fine ride. The Reading club seems lonely—perhaps it weeps for you.

Dwight Cowan does very well—the Horse is quite "uncommon." Hunt is shingling the barn. We are going to have some new hens—a few.

I reserve the close for bad news—we can't come to hear Jennie—we are coming, but can't now. There are several reasons why—the first we are not near ready—Miss Leonard is coming this week—Grandmother is coming to see us—if we go now we can't stay any—we cannot come now and again—it would be all haste and confusion—we should have to hurry home, and we do not think it best. We shall come before long, when we are all prepared—"two monuments of the past" would make quite a stir in Boston! You mustn't be disappointed, nor blame the folks at all—they would be perfectly willing if we tho't best ourselves. Give our love to our friends, thank them *much* for their kindness; we *will* come and see them and you tho' now it is not convenient. All of the folks send love.

Your aff

Emily.

Mother says if there's anything more you want, if you will only write us Mrs Kimberly will make it—also if you have any things which you would like to send home Henry Kellogg is there, and you can send by him. Write as often as possible. Take care of yourself—

Special love to Emily, and the little cousins.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday Evening. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./Care of Loring Norcross Esq./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Jun 16.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 80, in part; *LL* 154, in part; *L* (1931) 77–78, in part; *Home* 130–139, entire, with facsimile reproduction.

Austin wrote twice in the first week of his absence, and urged his sisters to come to Boston to hear Jenny Lind. ED cites the coming of the dress-maker as one reason for refusal. "Dr. Webster's bones" alludes to the notori-

ous murder in a Harvard laboratory of Dr. George Parkman by his colleague Dr. John W. Webster in 1849. Webster was hanged, and buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery, which ED had visited in 1846.

To Austin Dickinson

22 June 1851

I rec'd your letter Austin, permit me to thank you for it, and to request some more as soon as it's convenient—permit me to accord with your discreet opinion concerning Swedish Jennie, and to commend the heart brave eno' to express it—combating the opinion of two civilized worlds, and New York into the bargain, must need considerable daring—indeed it had never occurred to me that amidst the Hallelujahs one tongue would dare to be dumb—and much less I assure you that this dissenting one should be my romantic Brother! For I had looked for delight and a very high style of rapture in such a youth as you—Father perused the letter and verily for joy the poor man could hardly contain himself—he read and read again, and each time seemed to relish the story more than at first. Fearing the consequences on a mind so formed as his, I seized the exciting sheet, and bore it away to my folio to amuse nations to come.

"If it had only come" in the language of your Father, "a single day before," in the twinkling of an eye "it had been transferred to the Paper" to tell this foolish world that one man living in it dares to say what he *thinks*—nor heeds if some dog bark. So soon as he was calm he began to proclaim your opinion—the effect cannot be described—encomium followed encomium—applause deafened applause—the whole town reeled and staggered as *it* were a drunken man—rocks rent—graves opened—and the seeds which had'nt come up were heard to set up growing—the sun went down in clouds—the moon rose in glory—Alpha Delta, All Hail!

We have all been rather *piqued* at Jennie's singing so well, and this first calumnious whisper pleases us so well. We rejoice that we did not come—our visit is yet before us.

The *Bonnet* came safely Saturday, and is pronounced by *us all* to be *very beautiful*—mother is very much pleased with it, says it is "just



to her mind," you could'nt have suited us better *possibly* if you'd tried.

Mother wants me to thank you for all your pains and trouble, and says you "are very kind to do so much for your mother."

You hav'nt told us yet as you promised about your home—what kind of people they are—whether you find them pleasant—whether those timid gentlemen have yet "found tongue to say"—do you find the life and living any more annoying than you at first expected—do you light upon any friends to help the time away—have you whipped any more bad boys—all these are solemn questions, pray give them proper heed!

Two weeks of your time are gone, I cant help wondering sometimes if you would love to see us, and come to this still home—I cant help wanting to see you now and then at times and my interviews with you at the *Barn* are fraught with a saddened interest. I suppose I am a fool—you always said I was one, and yet I have some feelings that seem sensible to me, and I have desires to see you now that you are gone which are really quite intelligent. Dont take too much encouragement, but really I have the hope of becoming before you come quite an *accountable being*!

Why not an "eleventh hour" in the life of the *mind* as well as such an one in the life of the *soul*—greyhaired sinners are saved—simple maids may be *wise*, who knoweth?

The yard round the house has been mowed and presents quite a fine appearance—Dwight continues to do very well, Baalis Sanford was here last week; has gone to Bridgwater now, and will be here again sometime this week.

Our Reading Club still is, and becomes now very pleasant—*Stebbins* comes in to read now, and *Spencer*—t'would not be so if *you* were here—the *last* time *Charles* came in when we had finished reading, and we broke up with a *dance*—make your own reflections at the story I just told you—the Tutors come after us, and walk home with us—we *enjoy that*! A *Senior Levee* was held at Prof and Mrs Haven's on Tuesday of last week—quite an oldfashioned time—Vinnie and dodging *Chapin* was the only fun they had there—Vinnie played pretty well! There's another at the President's this next Friday evening—"Clarum et venerabile" Seniors! Emily Fowler inquires for you—also M. and Susie—Give my love to my friends, and write me as soon as you can—the folks all send their love. *B F N. is married.*

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday evening.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 77-78, in part; *LL* 151-152, in part; *L* (1931) 74-75, in part; *Home* 143-145, entire.

Professor Haven came to Amherst in 1850. The president, at this time, was Edward Hitchcock. B. F. Newton, married on June 4, was already stricken with pulmonary tuberculosis, and died within two years; his wife was twelve years older than he. Austin was a member of Alpha Delta Phi fraternity.

To Austin Dickinson

29 June 1851

At my old stand again Dear Austin, and happy as a queen to know that while I speak those whom I love are listening, and I am happier still if I shall make *them* happy.

I have just finished reading your letter which was brought in since church. Mr Pierce was not out today, the wife of this same man took upon her *his* duties, and brought the letter *herself* since we came in from church. I like it grandly—very—because it is so long, and also it's *so* funny—we have all been laughing till the old house rung again at your delineations of men, women, and things. I feel quite like retiring, in presence of one so grand, and casting my small lot among small birds, and fishes—you say you dont comprehend me, you want a simpler style. *Gratitude* indeed for all my fine philosophy! I strove to be exalted thinking I might reach *you* and while I pant and struggle and climb the nearest cloud, you walk out very leisurely in your slippers from Empyrean, and without the *slightest* notice request me to get down! As *simple* as you please, the *simplest* sort of simple—I'll be a little ninny—a little pussy catty, a little Red Riding Hood, I'll wear a Bee in my Bonnet, and a Rose bud in my hair, and what remains to do you shall be told hereafter.

Your letters are richest treats, send them always just such warm days—they are worth a score of fans, and many refrigerators—the only "diffikilty" they are so very *queer*, and *laughing* such hot weather is *anything* but *amusing*. A little more of earnest, and a little less of jest until we are out of August, and then you may joke as freely as the Father of Rogues himself, and we will banish care, and daily die a laughing! It is *very* hot here now, I dont believe it's any hotter in



Boston than t'is here—we cant lie down to sleep lest we wake up in burning. I verily *baked* in bed the last time I retired, but now adopt a method of keeping up all night which having never *tried* I think will turn out nicely! I hope you're very careful in working, eating and drinking when the heat is so great—there are temptations there which at home you are free from—beware the juicy fruits, and the cooling ades, and cordials, and do not eat *ice-cream*, it is so very *dangerous*—the folks think much about you, and are so afraid you'll get sick by being rash or imprudent—for our sakes Austin wont you try to be careful? I know *my* sake a'nt much, but Vinnie's is considerab[le]—it weighs a good many pounds—when *skin and bones* may plead, I will become a *persuasion*, but you have *other* friends who are much more substantial. I know of *sisters twain*—Oh Youth, come back again, they sing—you ask me of the "postscript"—it's coming—the writers are well, and come often to see Vinnie and me—they do not have any *rides* except Martha went with Barton on horseback the other morning. Root has quite left the field—our little neighbor Jones we are happy to say is faithful. We talk of you together, and intersperse remarks with snatches from your letters.

You ask about the carriage, it is to be done this week, when you get home we'll ride, perhaps we will "take a tour."

Mother feels quite anxious to know about your *clothes*, washing, ironing, &c. Vinnie suggests in connection that she may sometimes occur to mind when you would like collars washed—I told her I would'nt tell you—I hav'nt however decided whether I will or not. I often put on five knives, and four and another tumbler forgetting for the moment that "we are not all here," it occurs to me however, and I remove the extra and brush a tear away in memory of my brother.

We miss you now and always—when God bestows but *three* and one of those is withholden the *others* are left alone. *Moody Cook* took tea here Saturday—he came to see "his pony" and it being supper-time Father asked him to stay—he took *your* seat at the table which led to some remarks concerning yourself, and your absence, which your ear may hear. "Somehow he and Austin always *were* good friends—he was none of your *mean* boys—doing *small mean* things, and there was something in him which always made *folks mind*—when Austin was at home Austin was *in town*" tho' this I comprehend not the nescesity of *stating* it seeming quite instinctive, and not needful

to prove. Father told him about your early youth, your love for trade and driving—instanced *Hens* and *Bees* as nearest illustrations. By the way—I forgive you that *fraud* of 25 cts and hope Almighty Jove will be very merciful! Father thinks *Moody Cook* put spirit in the cider when he was here in the spring and thinks *you* understand it, and that your-self and *Moody* are in some way joking him—he has thought so much about it that he said he should write, and ask you—we young ones laugh in our sleeves, and think he is rather crazy. Father is as uneasy when you are gone away as if you catch a trout, and put him in Sahara—when you *first* went away he came home very frequently—walked gravely towards the barn, and returned looking very stately—then strode away down street as if the foe was coming—*now* he is more resigned—contents himself by fancying that "we shall *hear* today," and then when we *do not* hear, he wags his head profound, and thinks without a doubt there will be news "tomorrow." "Once one is two" once one *will be* two ah I have it here! I wish you could have some cherries—if there was any way we would send you a basket of them—they are very large and delicious, and are just ripening now—little Austin Grout comes every day to pick them, and mother takes great comfort in calling him by name, from vague association with her departed boy. Austin, to tell the *truth*, it is very still and lonely. I do wish you were here despite the darkened Laddy—they are bad enough in darkness, I really dont feel willing that they should come to light thro' such a daring medium—Emeline and Sarah took a trip some-time since, and have not yet returned—from all that I can learn I conclude that "I tell Eliza" is his consoling now—in other language Austin—she has become "Miss Mills."

Root has been here twice—B Harrington once, and others in due proportion—W. Dickinson is going to write you—Bowdoin is "around." The railroad is a "workin"—my love to all my friends. I am on my way down stairs to put the teakettle boiling—writing and taking tea cannot sympathize—if you forget me now your right hand *shall* it's cunning.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday afternoon. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./Care of Loring Norcross Esq./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jun 30.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 85-87, in part; L (1931) 84-86, in part; *Home* 146-148, entire.

The references to persons in this letter are so obscure as to make identification unwarrantable. An enclosed note from Lavinia suggests that Emeline Kellogg, who lived next door, and Henry Nash, whom she later married, may have been the ones principally concerned.

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To Austin Dickinson

6 July 1851

I have just come in from Church very hot, and faded, having witnessed a couple of Baptisms, three admissions to church, a Supper of the Lord, and some other minor transactions time fails me to record. Knowing Rev A. M. Colton so thoroughly as you do, having received much benefit from his past ministrations, and bearing the relation of "Lamb" unto his fold, you will delight to know that he is well, and preaching, that he has preached *today* strange as it may—must seem, that just from his benediction I hurry away to you. No doubt you can call to mind his eloquent addresses, his earnest look and gesture, his calls of *now today*—no doubt you can call to mind the impetus of spirit received from this same gentleman and his enlivening preaching—therefore if you should fancy I'd looked upon the *wine* from walk or conversation a little fierce or fiery, bear all these things in mind!

Our church grows interesting, Zion lifts her head—I overhear remarks signifying Jerusalem, I do not feel at liberty to say any more today! I wanted to write you *Friday*, the night of Jennie Lind, but reaching home past midnight, and *my room* sometime after, encountering several perils starting, and on the way, among which a *kicking horse*, an inexperienced driver, a number of Jove's thunderbolts, and a very terrible rain, are worthy to have record. All of us went—just four—add an absent individual and that will make full five—the concert commenced at eight, but knowing the world was *hollow* we thought we'd start at six, and come up with everybody that meant to come up with us—we had proceeded some steps when one of the beasts showed symptoms, and just by the *blacksmith's shop* exercises commenced, consisting of kicking and plunging on the part

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of the horse, and whips and moral sensation from the *gentleman* who drove—the horse refused to proceed, and your respected family with much chagrin dismounted, advanced to the hotel, and for a season halted—another horse procured, we were politely invited to take our seats, and proceed, which we refused to do till the animal was warranted—about half thro' our journey thunder was said to be heard, and a suspicious *cloud* came travelling up the sky—what words express our horror when rain began to fall—in drops—sheets—cata-racts—what *fancy conceive* of drippings and of drenchings which we met on the way—how the stage and its mourning captives drew up at Warner's hotel—how all of us alighted, and were conducted in, how the rain did not abate, how we walked in silence to the old Edwards Church and took our seats in the same, how Jennie came out like a child and sang and sang again, how boquets fell in showers, and the roof was rent with applause—how it thundered outside, and inside with the thunder of God and of men—judge ye which was the loudest—how we all loved Jennie Lind, but not accustomed oft to her manner of singing didn't fancy *that* so well as we did *her*—no doubt it was very fine—but take some notes from her "Echo"—the Bird sounds from the "Bird Song" and some of her curious trills, and I'd rather have a Yankee.

*Herself*, and not her music, was what we seemed to love—she has an air of *exile* in her mild blue eyes, and a something sweet and touching in her native accent which charms her many friends—"Give me my thatched cottage" as she sang grew so earnest she seemed half lost in song and for a transient time I fancied she *had* found it and would be seen "*na mair*," and then her foreign accent made her again a wanderer—we will talk about her sometime when you come—Father sat all the evening looking *mad*, and *silly*, and yet so much amused you would have *died* a laughing—when the performers bowed, he said "Good evening Sir"—and when they retired, "very well—that will do," it was't *sarcasm* exactly, nor it was't *disdain*, it was infinitely funnier than either of those virtues, as if old Abraham had come to see the show, and thought it was all very well, but a little excess of *Monkey*! She took 4000 \$ / *mistake* arithmetical / for tickets at Northampton aside from all expenses. I'm glad you took a seat opposite Lord Mayor—if he had sat in your lap it had pleased me even better—it must seem pretty grand to be a city officer and pat the

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Sheriff's back, and wink to the Policemen! I'm sorry you got so tired, and would suggest respectfully a Rose in every thorn!

We are all pretty comfortable, and things get along well—Bowdoin has gone home haying—the Tutors are hanging on—Francis March is here, had not been *seen* at the latest—the Exhibition came, and *went* for all that I know—choosing not to “tend.” Sanford—Valedictorian—Stebbins—Salutatorian—Carr [Karr]—Oratio Philosophico—I do not know the rest, except that W<sup>m</sup> Washburn has a Dissertation from the delivery of which he is “respectfully excused.”

About our coming to Boston—we think we shall probably *come*—we want to see our friends—yourself and Aunt L's family—we don't care a fig for the *museum*, the stillness, or Jennie Lind. We are not going to stay long—not more than a week—are sorry Emily is gone, but she shall come to see us—how long will Joel be gone—we have talked of Thursday or Friday as the earliest that we should come—perhaps not until Monday—can you write a line and send to us tomorrow, how long Joe will be gone? Give our love to our friends, and tell them we will write them and let them know our plans as soon as we hear from you—Thank them if you please for their kind invitation, and tell them we are coming not to see *sights* but *them*, and therefore all the stillness will not incommode us. I saw Martha Friday—she inquired all about you, and said she was going to write, and Susie too that I could send next time—it has rained ever since then and it is raining now, now so I disappoint you—have patience Austin, and they shall come next time. Father says your letters are altogether before Shakespeare, and he will have them published to put in our library. Emily Fowler's regards—Love from us all—don't know what I say I write in such a hurry.

Your aff Sister

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday afternoon.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 81–83, in part; *L* (1931) 80–83, in part; *Home* 150–153, entire.

The churches were generally the only meeting places in New England towns large enough to hold such an audience as Jenny Lind could draw. ED never heard any other singer or instrumental musician of note.

To Austin Dickinson

13 July 1851

You mustn't *care* Dear Austin, Vinnie and I can't come—it isn't any matter, I hope you a'n't troubled about it. We *were* disappointed at first, because not very well, and thinking while at Boston we would see Aunt Lavinia's physician; we didn't want to tell *you why* we were bent on coming, thinking now you were *gone* you might feel anxious about us—we knew it would worry you and therefore made our plans to come now and see you, and saying not a word to any but Aunt L—follow the advice of her Homeopathic physician. If we had told our reasons for coming at this time we should have seemed more reasonable in wishing so much to come, and we knew you would have us *at once* tho' it might not be convenient.

We are not very sick, we work and go out and have company, but neither of us are well—Dr Brewster has fussed until we are satisfied that he doesn't know what ails us, and we are tired and wearied of being under his care. Father has great confidence in Dr Dean of Greenfield, and thinks sometime this week we may ride up and see him. If he can't tell what ails us, nor do us any good, then we will come in the autumn and see the other man.

Do not feel anxious for us—I think we will soon be well—we have been ailing sometime but not very seriously, and Dr Brewster has tried one thing after another till we are most discouraged, and sometimes we think to ourselves that we shant ever get well, but I guess we shall. I long so to see you Austin, and hear your happy voice, it will do us all more good than any other medicine. Do not blame yourself for what you said and did, and do not allow our friends to reproach themselves at all—we knew you had kindest reasons and thank you and them for so kindly consulting our pleasure.

When you go back in the autumn we can see you then, and you mustn't think anything about it, or care for what you wrote. I don't know what Father said—did know not he was going to write you—your sorrowful letter was our first intimation that ever he had written, and I guess we felt as badly to get such a letter from *you*, as you did or *could* at what you heard from Father. I feel so grieved, dear Austin, if Father has blamed *you*, *Viny* and *me* are the ones if there is fault *anywhere*—we should have told you frankly why we wished to



come—but we didn't want to worry you as we feared we should. Never mind it Austin—we shall see you soon and tell you all those things which seem obscure when written. Tell all our friends and Joel that we would love to see them but think we will stay at home and come some other time—much love to them all. Joel mustn't look in any of the Depots for he won't find us there, and it would give him trouble. You mustn't think of such a thing as seeing us now, for we have *decided*, and think not best to come.

Vinnie will write you soon—sends her love—mine too. Mother sends her love and a little curl of her hair “to put you in mind of your affectionate mother”—Sue and Martha send love. Bowdoin is haying yet—we expect him soon—take good care of yourself Austin, we shall all be so happy to see your face at home.

It is late—Goodnight—Vinnie is snoring!

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday night.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 153–155.

To Austin Dickinson

20 July 1851

Seems to me you are hardly *fair*, not to send me any letter—I was somewhat disappointed to be thus overlooked—my note from you once a week, had come so very punctually I *did* set my heart on getting a *little something*—even a *word* of love, a *line* not quite unmindful, and I had from my heart fully and freely forgiven you, but now I am very angry—you shall not have a tender mercy—as I live saith me, and as my inkstand liveth you shall have no peace until all is fulfilled. If I thought you would *care* any I would hold my tongue so tight that Inquisition *itself* shouldn't wring a sentence from me—but t'would only punish *me* who would fain get off *unpunished*, therefore *here I am*, a'nt you happy to see me? Since you didn't write to *me* I pocketed my sorrows, and I hope they are being sanctified to my *future* good—that is to say—I shall “know what to expect, [”] and my “expectations will *not* be realized,” you will pardon the freedom I use with your remarks. How it made us laugh—Poor little Sons of Erin—I should think they would rue the day that ever you

came among them. Oh how I wish I could see your world and it's little kingdoms, and I wish I could see the King—Stranger—he was my *Brother*! I fancy little boys of several little sizes, some of them clothed in *blue* cloth, some of them clad in *gray*—I seat them round on benches in the schoolroom of my mind—then I set them all to shaking—on peril of their lives that they move their lips or whisper—then I clothe you with authority and empower you to punish, and to enforce the law, I call you “Rabbi—Master,” and the picture is complete! It would seem very funny, say for Susie and me to come round as Committee—we should enjoy the terrors of 50 little boys and any specimens of *discipline* in your way would be a rare treat for us. I should love to know how you managed—whether government as a *science* is laid down and executed, or whether you *cuff and thrash* as the occasion dictates—whether you use *pure law* as in the case of *commanding*, or whether you *enforce* it by means of sticks and stones as in the case of *agents*—I suppose you have authority bounded but by their lives, and from a remark in one of your earliest letters I was led to conclude that on a certain occasion you *hit the boundary line*! I should think you'd be tired of school and teaching and such hot weather, I really wish you were *here* and the Endicot school where you *found* it—whenever we go to ride in our beautiful family carriage, we think if “wishes were horses” we *four* “beggars would ride.” We shall enjoy brimfull everything *now* but *half* full, and to have you home once more will be like living *again*!

We are having a pleasant summer—without one of the five it is yet a *lonely* one—Vinnie says sometimes—Didn't we have a *brother*—it seems to me we *did*—his name was Austin—we call, but he answers not again—Echo—where is Austin—laughing—“where is Austin”? I do hope you'll be careful so as to come home *well*. I wish they need not *exhibit* just for once in the year, and give you up on *Saturday* instead of the next week *Wednesday*, but keep your courage up and show forth those Emerald Isles till School Committees and Mayors are *blinded* with the dazzling! Wouldn't I love to be there with certain *friends* of mine—*Toilet Cushions*, and “*Carpets*,” &c, is what I mean! If this should seem *obscure* let me recommend *West St* as an appropriate “Pony” together with *other* ponies, such as Mr and Mrs Cutler! Susie is at home—Martha is in Burlington seeing a friend of her's. I see more of Susie than of any other girl. She said

the last time I saw her, she had'nt had a "talk since Austin went away"—she and Martha too seem to miss you much, and talk a great deal of seeing you. Abby Wood has gone to visit Miss Peck in New Haven—the rest of the girls are at home. Sprague's *shop* was set on fire one night last week, and came very near burning up—the roof was burnt off, and it met some other injuries—a process is going on to find out the offenders. John Emerson has come, and has entered himself as a student in Father's office—he carries about the sail of a good sized British vessel, when he has oped his mouth I *think* no dog has barked. Root spent with us Friday evening—inquired for you with interest, and said he'd be glad to see you.

Our apples are ripening fast—I am fully convinced that with *your* approbation they will not only *pick themselves*, but arrange one another in baskets, and present themselves to be eaten.

Love from all to all there—to *Joel*—hope he is better.

Emilie.

Mother and Vinnie send their love. We all want to see you. Mrs S. E. Mack, and Mrs James Parsons want to see you. John Sanford acts like a simpleton since he got the valedictory, he is so delighted, he dont know what to do.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday Evening.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 83–85, in part; L (1931) 83–84, in part; *Home* 155–157, entire.

Cornelia (Nellie) Peck later married J. Howard Sweetser. The wheelwright shop of Sprague and Perkins burned on 15 July. John Emerson was an admirer of Eliza Coleman.

To Austin Dickinson

27 July 1851

"I will never desert Micawber" however *he may* be forgetful of the "Twins" and me, I promised the Rev Sir to "cherish" Mr Micawber, and cherish him I *will*, tho Pope or Principality, endeavor to drive me from it—the "Twins" cling to him *still*—it would quite break his heart abandoned tho' he be, to hear them talk about him. Twin *Martha* broke her heart and went to the Green Mountain, from the topmost

cliff of which she flings the *pieces* round. Twin *Susan* is more calm, tho' in *most deep* affliction. You'd better not come home, I say the *law* will have you, a *pupil* of the law, o'ertaken *by* the law, and brought to "condign punishment"—scene for angels and men—or rather for *Archangels* who being a little *higher* would seem to have a 'vantage so far as view's concerned! "Are you pretty comfortable tho," and are you deaf and dumb and gone to the asylum where such afflicted persons learn to hold their tongues?

The next time you a'nt going to write me I'd thank you to let me know—this kind of *protracted* insult is what no man can bear—fight with me like a man—let me have fair shot, and you are "caput mortuum" et "cap a pie," and that ends the business! If you really think I so deserve this silence tell me why—how—I'll be a *thorough* scamp or else I wont be *any*, just which you prefer!

[Horace] Taylor of Spencer's class went to Boston yesterday, it was in my heart to send an *apple* by him for your private use, but Father overheard some of my intentions and said they were "rather small"—whether this remark was intended for the *apple*, or for my noble self I did not think to ask him—I rather think he intended to give us *both* a cut—however, he may go!

You are coming home on Wednesday, as perhaps you know, and I am very happy in prospect of your coming, and hope you want to see us as much as we do you. Mother makes nicer pies with reference to your coming, I arrange my tho'ts in a convenient shape, Vinnie grows only *pert* and *more pert* day by day.

The Horse is looking finely, better than in his life, by which you may think him *dead* unless I add *before*. The carriage stands in state all covered in the chaise-house—we have *one foundling hen* into whose young mind I seek to instill the fact that "Massa is a comin!" The garden is amazing—we have beets and beans, have had *splendid potatoes* for three weeks now. Old Amos weeds and hoes and has an oversight of all thoughtless vegetables. The apples are fine and large in spite of my impression that *Father* called them "small."

*Yesterday* there was a *fire*—at about 3. in the afternoon Mr Kimberly's barn was discovered to be on fire—the wind was blowing a gale directly from the west, and having had no rain, the roofs [were] as dry as stubble. Mr Palmer's house was cleared—the *little house* of Father's, and Mr Kimberly's also. The engine was broken

and it seemed for a little while as if the whole street must go. The Kimberly barn was burnt down, and the house much charred and injured, tho not at all destroyed. Mr Palmer's barn took fire and Dea Leland's also, but were extinguished with only part burned roofs. We all feel very thankful at such a narrow escape. Father says there was never such imminent danger, and such miraculous escape. Father and Mr Frink took charge of the fire, or rather of the *water*, since fire *usually* takes care of *itself*. The men all worked like heroes, and after the fire was out Father gave commands to have them march to Howe's where an entertainment was provided for them—after the whole was over, they gave "three cheers for Edward Dickinson, and three more for the Insurance Company"!

On the whole it is very wonderful that we didn't all burn up, and we ought to hold our tongues and be very thankful. If there *must* be a fire I'm sorry it couldn't wait until you had got home, because you seem to enjoy such things so very much.

There is nothing of moment now which I can find to tell you except a case of measles in Hartford. The Colemans were here last week, passed a night here—they came to get John Emerson to travel with W<sup>m</sup> Flint. John went to Monson Saturday, and starts with W<sup>m</sup> Flint for the White Mts today.

This is one more feather in the Valedictorian's cap, I guess he thinks he will certainly have her now—I mean will have *Eliza*. If I loved a girl to distraction, I think it would take some coaxing before I would act as footman to her crazy friends—yet love is *pretty solemn*. I don't know as I blame John. He is going to be Tutor next year. Vinnie and I made Currant Wine one day last week, I think it will suit you finely.

You remember James Kellogg's Dogs—the one they kept for a watch dog was poisoned by someone and died last week. Chauncey Russell, Frank Pierce, and George Cutler are somewhere on the coast catching fur and fishes, but principally the *former*. Perhaps they have called on you during their travels sometime tho' I don't know their route exactly. Would'nt I love to take a peep at Old Fanueil and all the little Irish, the day of the city fair?

Goodbye Sir—Fare you well, my benison to your school.

The folks all send their love. My compliments to Joel.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated Sunday night. Envelope addressed: Austin Dickinson./Care of Loring Norcross Esq./Boston./Mass.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 109-111, in part; L (1931) 104-106, in part; *Home* 157-159, entire.

The houses on the east side of the common were close together, and a fire in one endangered a large section. According to the records of the Hampshire County registry of deeds, Edward Dickinson purchased from Nathan Dickinson, 16 March 1840, a house on the east side of the common. William Flynt, a cousin from Monson, had been ill. Henry Frink was landlord of the newly opened Hygeian Hotel (American House).

To Abiah Root

19 August 1851

"Yet a little while I am with you, and again a little while and I am *not* with you" because you go to your mother! Did she not tell me saying, "yet a little while ye shall see me and again a little while and ye shall *not* see me, and I would that where I am, there ye may be also"—but the virtue of the text consists in *this* my dear—that "if I go, I *come* again, and ye shall be with me where I *am*;" that is to say, that if you come in *November* you shall be mine, and I shall be thine, and so on "vice versa" until "ad infinitum" which isn't a *great* way off! While I think of it my dear friend, and we are upon these subjects, allow me to remark that you have the funniest manner of popping into town, and the most *lamentable* manner of popping *out* again of any one I know.

It really becomes to me a matter of serious moment, this propensity of your's concerning your female friends—the "morning cloud and the early dew" are not more evanescent.

I think it was *Tuesday evening* that we were so amused by the oratorical feats of three or four young gentlemen—I remember I sat by you and took great satisfaction in such seat and society—I remember further our mutual Goodnights, our promises to meet again, to tell each other tales of our own heart and life, to seek and find each other after so long a time of distant separation—I can hardly realize Abiah that these are *recollections*, that our happy *today* joins the great band of *yesterdays* and marches on to the dead—too quickly *flown* my



Bird, for me to satisfy me that you *did* sit and sing beneath my chamber window! I only went out *once* after the time I saw you—the morning of Mr Beecher, I looked for you in vain—I discovered your Palmer cousins, but if you indeed were *there* it must have been in a form to my gross sense impalpable. I was *disappointed* Abiah—I had been hoping much a little visit from you—when will the hour *be* that we shall sit together and talk of what we were, and what we *are* and may be—with the shutters *closed*, dear Abiah and the balmiest little breeze stealing in at the window? I *love* those little fancies, yet I would love them *more* were they not *quite so fanciful* as they have seemed to be—I have fancied so many times and so many times gone home to find it was *only* fancy that I am half afraid to *hope* for what I *long* for. It would seem my dear Abiah that out of all the moments crowding this little world a *few* might be vouchsafed to spend with those we love—a *separated* hour—an hour more pure and true than *ordinary* hours, when we could *pause* a moment before we journey on—we had a *pleasant* time talking the other morning—had I known it was *all my portion*, mayhap I'd *improved* it more—but it never'll come back again to try whether or no. Dont you think sometimes these brief imperfect meetings have a tale to tell—perhaps but for the sorrow which accompanies *them* we would not be reminded of brevity and change—and would build the dwelling *earthward* whose site is in the skies—perhaps the treasure *here* would be *too dear* a treasure—could'nt “the moth corrupt, and the thief break thro' and steal”—and this makes me think how I *found* a little moth in my stores the other day—a very *subtle* moth that had in ways and manners to me and mine unknown, contrived to hide itself in a favorite worsted basket—how long my little treasurehouse had furnished an arena for it's destroying labors it is not *mine* to tell—it had an *errand* there—I trust it fulfilled it's mission; it taught me dear Abiah to have no treasure *here*, or rather it tried to tell me in it's little mothly way of another *enduring* treasure, the robber cannot steal which, nor time waste away. How many a lesson learned from lips of such tiny teachers—dont it make you think of the Bible—“not many mighty—not wise”?

You met our dear Sarah Tracy after I saw you here—her sweet face is the same as in those happy school days—and in vain I search for wrinkles brought on by many cares—we all love Sarah dearly, and shall try to do all in our power to make her visit happy. Is'nt it very

remarkable that in so many years Sarah has changed so little—not that she has stood still, but has made such *peaceful* progress—her tho'ts tho' they are *older* have all the charm of youth—have not yet lost their freshness, their innocence and peace—she seems so pure in heart—so sunny and serene, like some sweet Lark or Robin ever soaring and singing—I have not seen her much—I want to see her more—she speaks often of *you*, and with a warm affection—I hope no change or time shall *blight* these loves of ou[r]'s, I would bear them all in my arms to my home in the glorious heaven and say “here am I my Father, and those whom thou hast given me.” If the life which is to come is better than dwelling *here*, and angels are there and our friends are glorified and are singing there and praising there need we fear to go—when spirits beyond *wait* for us—I was meaning to see you more and talk about such things with you—I want to know your views and your *eternal* feelings—how things *beyond* are to you—Oh there is much to speak of in meeting one you love, and it always seems to me that I might have spoken more, and I almost always think that what *was* found to say might have been left unspoken.

Shall it *always* be so Abiah—is there no *longer* day given for our communion with the spirits of our love?—writing is brief and fleeting—conversation will come again, yet if it *will*, it hastes and must be on it's way—earth is short Abiah, but Paradise is *long* there must be many moments in an eternal day—then *sometime* we shall tarry, while time and tide *roll on*, and till then Vale!

Your own dear

Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 9). Ink. Dated: Tuesday Evening.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 53–57, in part; L (1931) 46–50, in part.

ED had seen Abiah unexpectedly during commencement activities on 12 August. Next morning Henry Ward Beecher delivered an address on “Imagination.” Graduation was held on Thursday. Probably this letter was written the following Tuesday. The first quotation recalls John 16.16; the second, Matthew 6.19; the third, 1 Corinthians 1.26. The last, from John 17.24, is also quoted in letter no. 785.

To Austin Dickinson

Boston, 8 September 1851

You are very thoughtful Austin to make so many plans for our pleasure and happiness, and yet it is so hot we hardly feel like going out. We had a very pleasant evening, and will tell you something when you come. Will you come after school this morning? It seems a great while since we've seen you. We are very warm indeed, but quite happy — we will be very much so if you will be sure to come. Vinnie and I like your friend very much.

You mustn't feel disappointed for yourself or for us, because it is so hot that we don't think we can come — it will be cooler sometime. Vinnie is comfortable — did you rest well last night, and have a nice breakfast this morning.

Sure to come!

Emily

Fanny sends her love

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Addressed on the fold: Austin Dickinson./ Endicot school.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 163.

In September Emily and Lavinia made their long anticipated visit to Boston, staying with the Norcrosses from 6 to 26 September. This note, written then, was delivered by hand at the school. Fanny Norcross was now four years old.

To Austin Dickinson

23 September 1851

We have got home, dear Austin — it is very lonely here — I have tried to make up my mind which was better — home, and parents, and country; or city, and smoke, and dust, shared with the only being I can call my Brother — the scales don't poise very evenly, but so far as I can judge, the balance is in your favor. The folks are much more lonely than while we were away — they say they seemed to feel that we were straying together, and together would return, and the *unattended* sisters seemed very sad to them. They had been very well

indeed, and got along very nicely while we were away. When Father was gone at night, Eimeline [Kellogg] stayed with mother. They have had a number of friends to call, and visit with them. Mother never was busier than while we were away — what with fruit, and plants, and chickens, and sympathizing friends, she really was so hurried she hardly knew what to do.

Vinnie and I came safely, and met with no mishap — the boquet was not withered, nor was the bottle cracked. It was fortunate for the freight car, that Vinnie and I were there, our's being the only baggage passing along the line. The folks looked very funny, who travelled with us that day — they were dim and faded like folks passed away — the conductor seemed so grand with about *half a dozen* tickets, which he dispersed, and demanded in a very small space of time — I judged that the *minority* were travelling that day, and couldn't hardly help smiling at our ticket friend, however sorry I was at the small amount of people, passing along his way. He looked as if he wanted to make an apology for not having more travellers to keep him company.

The route and the cars seemed strangely — there were no boys with fruit, there were no boys with pamphlets — one fearful little fellow ventured into the car with what appeared to be publications and tracts — he offered them to no one, and no one inquired for them, and he seemed greatly relieved that no one wanted to buy them.

At Sunderland, we happened to think that we might find John Thompson, and find John Thompson we did, just sitting down to dinner — he seemed overjoyed to see us — wants very much to see you — asked many questions about yourself and school, all of which we answered in a most glowing manner, and John's countenance fell — we asked him if he was happy — “why, *pretty* happy” — they promised him “35.” according to his own story — only 25. of whom have yet made their appearance — he thinks he will not stay more than half a term, and wonders “how in the world” you contrived to be so happy, and like Sunderland people so exceedingly well. He says he has no plan, should he not remain there — seems to be somewhat sober at the little he finds to do — studies law in his leisure. “The Elder” had gone to dinner — Mr Russell was there, seemed quite pleased to see us for our brother's sake — he asked us all about you, and expressed his sincere pleasure in your present prosperity — “wished they had had you *there*,” when Thompson was not present! There has been nothing said about Mr

Russell lately, as Landlord of the Hygeian—Prink is there himself, and seems to like it well, and probably will keep it, I judge from what they say. They have a great deal of company, and everything goes on well.

You wanted us to tell you about the Pelham Picnic—the folks didn't know that there had ever been any, so I cannot give you any information there. I suspect if there *was* a party, it was composed of persons whom none of us know. Calvin Merrill is married, you *know*—he had a great wedding party at the residence of his bride, the blooming Mrs Benjamin—Tim Henderson and "suite," and Cotton Smith and suite were among the guests, and were suitably honored. Mr Merrill resides with the recent Mrs Merrill, alias Mrs Benjamin, *more* alias, Mrs Thompson—for the sake of the widowed lady for the third time a *bride*. I hope her buried Lords are buried very low, for if on some fine evening they should fancy to *rise* I fear their couple of angers might accompany them, and exercise themselves on grooms who erst were widowers, and widows who are brides.

Bowdoin has gone home on account of his eye—he has'nt been able to use it since we went away—the folks are afraid he will never have the use of it—he dont know when he'll come back—probably not, till it gets well, which we fear may not soon be—at present his father is sick—pretty sick with the dysentery. Howland is here with father—will stay a while I guess. They go to Northampton together, as it is court there now and seem very happy together in the law. Father likes Howland grandly, and they go along as smoothly as friendly barks at sea—or when harmonious stanzas become one melody. Howland was here last evening—is jolly and just as happy—really I cant think now what *is* so happy as he. He wants to see you, says he is going to write you. Sanford is in town, but as yet we hav'nt seen him. Nobody knows what the fellow is here for.

You remember [John] Lord the Historian who gave some lectures here—he has come round again, and is lecturing now on the "Saints and Heroes." He gives them at the chapel—I guess all of us shall go—tho' we were too tired last evening. Prof Jewett has come and is living with his wife east of Gen Mack and *his* wife. Pretty perpendicular times, I guess, in the ancient mansion. I am glad we dont come home as we used, to this old castle. I could fancy that skeleton cats ever caught spectre rats in dim old nooks and corners, and when I hear the

query concerning the pilgrim fathers—and imperturbable Echo merely answers *where*, it becomes a satisfaction to know that they are there, sitting stark and stiff in Deacon Mack's mouldering arm chairs. We had'nt been home an hour, when Martha came to see us—she was here on Saturday after the stage came in, and was dreadfully disappointed because we did not come. She has'nt changed a bit, and I love her dearly. She was so indignant about her sweet boquet—she said it was kind and fragrant, and would have comforted you in the first few days of exile. I showed her all my treasures—I opened the little box containing the scented beads—I tried it on my wrist, she exclaimed it was how beautiful—then I clasped it on her own, and while she praised it's workmanship and turned it o'er and o'er, I told her it was her's, and you did send it to her—then that sweet face grew radiant, and joyful that blue eye, and Martha seemed so happy to know you'd tho't of her, it would have made you happy—I know! She said she should write you—if she has not, she will directly—she has had a letter from Sue—she is situated very pleasantly, and tells her sisters here that she can see no reason why she should not be happy—they are very kind to her—she loves some of her scholars. I hav'nt seen Martha long enough to ask but a very little, but I will find out everything before I write again. It has rained very hard all day, it has been "dark and dreary" and winds "are never weary."

Mother has three shirts which she is going to send you besides the ones we bro't—also a pair of bosoms which her forgetful son failed to carry away. She will send you the whole by the first good opportunity, and we shall send some fruit as soon as we have a chance. It is beautiful—*beautiful!* Mother sends much love and Vinnie.

Your lonely

Sister Emily

Father has just home come, having been gone today. I have therefore not till now got a glimpse of your letter. Sue's address is, Care of Mr Archer—40. Lexington St. I will keep the note till I see, or send, to Bowdoin. I answer all the questions in your note but *one*—that I cannot do till they let you come home—that will be *soon*, dear Austin—do not despair—we're "with you alway, even unto the end"! Tho' absence be not for "the present, joyous, but grievous, [""] it shall work out for us a far more exceeding and "eternal weight" of *presence!*

Give our love to our Boston friends—tell them we are well and



got home very nicely. Vinnie found the shawls very comfortable and thanks them much for them.

Speaking of *fireworks*, tell Joe we wont ever forget him—*forget him?—never*—“let April tree forget to bud”—etc!

Will Aunt Lavinia sometime tell Mrs Greely how beautifully the bouquet came, and how much it has been admired?

You may if you would like, remember both of your sisters to Misses Knight, and French, also tell Mr Nurse we are very sorry for him!

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Tuesday Evening. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms./Sep 24.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 87–89, in part; *LL* 160–161, in part; *L* (1931) 86–87, in part; *Home* 165–168, entire.

On the journey home from Boston the girls traveled by the Vermont & Massachusetts Railroad to Grout's Corner (Miller's Falls) and then fifteen miles by stage, through Sunderland. John Thompson, whom they saw there, had taken Austin's place as teacher in the Sunderland school. To support herself, Susan Gilbert left Amherst in September against family opposition to teach at a private school in Baltimore, conducted by Robert Archer.

To Austin Dickinson

1 October 1851

We are just thro' dinner, Austin, I want to write so much that I omit digestion, and a *dyspepsia* will probably be the result. I want to see you more than I ever did before—I should have written again, before I got your letter, but thought there might be something which I should love to tell you, or if you should ask any questions I would want to answer those. I received what you wrote, at about 2½ oclock yesterday. Father brought home the same, and waited himself in order to have me read it—I reviewed the contents hastily—striking out all suspicious places, and then very *artlessly* and unconsciously began. My heart went “pit a pat” till I got safely by a remark concerning Martha, and my stout heart was *not* till the manuscript was over. The allusion to Dick Cowles' grapes, followed by a sarcasm on Mr Adams' tomatoes, amused father highly. He quite *laid it to heart*, he thot, it was so

funny. Also the injunction concerning the college tax, father took occasion to say was “quite characteristic.”

You say we mustnt trouble to send you any fruit, also your clothes must give us no uneasiness. I dont ever want to have you say any more such things. They make me feel like crying. If you'd only *teased* us for it, and declared that you *would* have it, I shouldnt have cared so much that we could find no way to send you any, but you resign so cheerfully your birthright of purple grapes, and do not so much as *murmur* at the departing peaches, that I hardly can taste the one or drink the juice of the other. They are so *beautiful* Austin—we have such an *abundance* “while you perish with hunger.”

I do hope someone will make up a mind to go before our peaches are quite gone. The world is full of people travelling *everywhere*, until it occurs to you that you will send an errand, and then by “hook or crook” you cant find any traveller, who for money or love can be induced to go and convey the opprobrious package! It's a very selfish age, that is all I can say about it! Mr storekeeper Sweetser has been “almost persuaded” to go, but I believe he has put it off “till a more convenient season,” so to show my disapprobation, I shant buy any more gloves at Mr. Sweetser's store! Dont you think it will seem very cutting to see me pass by his goods, and purchase at Mr Kellogg's? I dont think I shall *retract* should he regret his course, and decide to go *tomorrow*, because it is the “*principle*” of disappointing people, which I disapprove!

You must not give it up, but that you will yet have some, there *may* be some good angel passing along your way, to whom we can entrust a snug little bundle—the peaches are very large—one side a *rosy* cheek, and the other a *golden*, and that peculiar coat of velvet and of down, which makes a peach so beautiful. The grapes too are fine, juicy, and *such* a purple—I fancy the robes of kings are not a *tint* more royal. The vine looks like a kingdom, with ripe round grapes for kings, and hungry mouths for subjects—the first instance on record of subjects devouring kings! You *shall* have some grapes dear Austin, if I have to come on foot in order to bring them to you.

The apples are very fine—it is'nt quite time to pick them—the cider is almost done—we shall have some I guess by Saturday, at *any rate Sunday noon*! The vegetables are not gathered, but will be before very long. The horse is doing nicely, he travels “like a bird,” to

use a favorite phrase of your delighted mother's. You ask about the leaves—shall I say they are falling? They had begun to fall before Vinnie and I came home, and we walked up the steps through "little brown ones rustling." Martha and I were talking of you the other night, how we wished you were here to see the autumn sun set, and walk and talk with us among the fading leaves.

Martha is very long talking of you and Susie, she seems unreconciled to letting you go away. She is down here most every day—she brings Sue's letters and reads them. It would make you laugh to hear all which she has to tell—she writes in excellent spirits, tho' Martha and I think they are "*unnatural*," we think she is so gay because she feels so badly and fancies we shant know. Susie asks in every letter why she dont hear from you—she says "Emily and Austin were going to write *so soon*, and I'll warrant I wont hear from either of them, for *one while*." I sent her a letter Monday—I hope if you have not written, you *will* do very soon, for Susie is so far off, and wants so much to have you. Martha wants to see you very much indeed, and sends her love to you. Emily Fowler has gone travelling somewhere with her father—New Haven and New York are to be the stopping places. Charlie has yet no school. I suspect he needs *your aid* in passing himself off somewhere. I have smiled a good many times at that fruitful ride to Sunderland, and the blessings and favors which accompanied it, to Charles. Vinnie tells me *she* has detailed the *news*—she reserved the *deaths* for me, thinking I might fall short of my usual letter somewhere. In accordance with her wishes, I acquaint you with the decease of your aged friend—Dea Kingsbury. He had no disease that we know of, but gradually went out. Martha Kingman has been very sick, and is not yet out of danger. Jane Grout is slowly improving, tho' very feeble yet. "Elizy" has been in Boston, she came home Tuesday night. She asked her friends, and they endeavored to find you, but could not.

She says she told you when you were at home that she should go in *October*, and you were coming to see her, but as she changed her mind and went *earlier*, she did not suppose of course, that you would know she was there. She was very sorry not to be able to find you.

Father has written to Monson to have them all come up here and make us a family visit—I hardly think they will come. If they dont, sometime, next week mother means to go to Monson, and make *them*

a little visit. Bowdoin's eye is better, and he has got back to the office—Howland has gone to Conway—will probably be here again in the course of two or three weeks. Did Vinnie tell you that she went with him to Ware, and how it made a hubbub in the domestic circle?

Emeline and Henry are just learning to say "*we*," I think they do very well for such "*new beginners*." There was quite an excitement in the village Monday evening. We were all startled by a violent church bell ringing, and thinking of nothing but fire, rushed out in the street to see. The sky was a beautiful red, bordering on a crimson, and rays of a gold pink color were constantly shooting off from a kind of sun in the centre. People were alarmed at this beautiful Phenomenon, supposing that fires somewhere were *coloring the sky*. The exhibition lasted for nearly 15. minutes, and the streets were full of people wondering and admiring. Father happened to see it among the very first and rang the bell *himself* to call attention to it. You will have a full account from the pen of Mr Trumbell, whom I have not a doubt, was seen with a large lead pencil, a noting down the sky at the time of it's highest glory. Father will write you soon—the day that your letter came with a list of our expenses—he seemed very busy, so I didnt read *that* part, and his hands have been so full that I have seen no time when I could show it to him—however he knows of all our expenditures, and will make everything right when you next come home—you dont like to have us ever speak of such things, but father wrote to know, and I tho't you might think it strange he should not write about it after your letter came. You will be here now *so soon*—we are impatient for it—we want to see you, Austin, how much I cannot say here.

Your aff  
Emily

Your clothes are in beautiful order, everything in waiting to have some way to send. I have heeled the lamb's wool stockings, and now and then repaired some imperfections in the destined shirts—when you *wear* them, you mustnt forget these things. You made us very happy while we were away. Love from all the folks, with a how I do want to see you!

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Wednesday noon. Envelope addressed: William Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Oct 2.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 90-93, in part; *LL* 162-164, in part; *L* (1931) 90-92, in part; *Home* 169-172, entire.

An account of the aurora borealis was published in the *Hampshire and Franklin Express* on 3 October. Each of the two Howland brothers, William and George, was for a time a special friend of Lavinia's. Emeline Kellogg and Henry Nash were married four years later. Samuel Kingsbury died, September 27, aged 88. On Jane Grout, see letter no. 60.

54

To Austin Dickinson

5 October 1851

I dont know why, dear Austin, there is'nt much to say which will interest you, but somehow I feel bound to let nobody escape me who may by any accident happen to light on *you*.

I take great satisfaction in the consciousness that no one eludes my vigilance, nor can by any means rid themselves of whatever bag or bundle I am disposed to send — and again, Austin, "when the day is dark and drear and the wind is never weary," a slight recollection may be of some avail in lighting the heart up. It is such a day *today* — nothing but rain and shower, and shower after shower of chilly pelting rain. I am at home from meeting on account of the storm and my *slender constitution*, which I assured the folks, would not permit my accompanying them today.

It is Communion Sunday, and they will stay a good while — what a nice time pussy and I have to enjoy ourselves! Just now the sun peeped out. I tell you I chased it back again behind the tallest cloud, it has not my permission to show its face again till after all the meeting, *then* it may shine and shine, for all pussy and I care!

I was glad to hear from you Austin, and again I was very sorry, if you can reconcile a story so inconsistent. Glad to know you were better — better *physically*, but who cares for a *body* whose *tenant* is ill at ease? Give me the aching *body*, and the spirit glad and serene, for if the gem shines on, forget the mouldering casket! I think you are better now — I fancy you *convalescent* during this rainy day. I am sure that long before *this time* that "hour" has passed away, and the "daughter of the dawn" has touched a note more gay, with her slight "rosy fingers." "No Rose but has a thorn," recollect this, dear Austin, and

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you will derive a faith rosier than *many* roses, which will quite compensate you for now and then a thorn! It expresses *worlds* to me, "some one to see who cares for [you], and for whom you care," and I think I laughed at the phrase "my own selve's company," as conveying a meaning very clear to me. I dont wonder that little room seems small and lonely, and I dont wonder the folks there seem *smaller still* — I *know* they are very little, very small indeed, I know that scores might vanish and nobody would miss them, they fill so small a crevice in a world full of life; how much you feel the need of a companion there. I wish a smiling fortune would send you such an one, but if you talk with no one, you are amassing thoughts which will be bright and golden for those you left at home — *we* meet our friends, and a constant interchange *wastes tho't* and feeling, and we are then obliged to *repair* and *renew* — there is'nt the *brimfull* feeling which one gets away.

Why when Vinnie and I came home, we were *rich* in conversation — we were rich in disdain for Bostonians and Boston, and a coffer fuller of *scorn, pity, commiseration*, a miser hardly bad.

Sometimes, I am afraid it will hurt you to stay there. I'm afraid the year you teach will become so embittered that all this blessed country cannot wash it away. Oh I hope not — if indeed no joy is added during one long year, I pray that there be no cankers which shall corrode away! I long for this Boston year to fall from out the circle, to perish and flee away, and be forever gone — your being where you are is a *mutual trial* — both yourself, and us, are for the time bereaved — yet your lot is the hardest, in that while *four anticipate*, in *your* case there's but one — we can gather together and say we are very lonely, and it would be so happy if we were all at home — yet one sustains the other — Vinnie and I console and comfort father and mother — I encourage Vinnie, Vinnie in turn cheers *me* — but one and alone, you are indeed dependant, in any pensive hour, dependant on *yourself* too, the very one of *all* least likely to sustain you — if it were not *hope*, it would not be *endurance*! Thank God there is *one* bird that singeth for *forever* and builds her nest anew in the boughs of paradise! You will have several friends to see you in the course of the week. W<sup>m</sup> Kellogg is going tomorrow — also Ebenezer Burgess of the senior class — Burgess called on Friday evening and offered to carry anything which we would like to send — he says he shall see you

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often—I believe he's an Alpha Delta, and I hope you'll be glad to see him, tho' I dont know enough about him to know whether you will or not.

Council Cutler was there last week, and said he would like to see you if he could get time—we told him where you were, but he came Saturday night and we hav'nt yet found out whether he saw you or not. How funny it seems to me to have you live in Boston, and be having calls from our country tradesmen!

Whatever else you forget, Austin, dont cease to remember *Smith*, who made such a plunge at you on a certain evening—keep *his* memory green, whatever else betides! I will use my utmost influence to keep him at home during the rest of your absence, and I'm sure you will wish me well in so needful an enterprise. Vinnie's love. Mother sends her love and your waistcoat, thinking you'll like the one, and quite likely *need* the other. All of the other clothes can go any time after Tuesday.

Your aff Sister

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday morning. Envelope addressed: Wm Austin Dickinson./Boston./Mass.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 90, one sentence only; *L* (1931) 88–90, in part; *Home* 181–183, entire.

The letter, without stamp or postmark, was delivered by hand, perhaps by Ebenezer Burgess, who is mentioned as the undergraduate who would probably see Austin. The quotation in the second paragraph attempts to recall the opening lines of Longfellow's "The Rainy Day": "The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;/It rains, and the wind is never weary." (See letter no. 36.)

55

To Austin Dickinson

7 October 1851

Dear Austin.

Father has just decided to go to Boston. I have no time to write. We send you a few of our grapes—wish they were nicer—wish too we had some peaches. I send one remaining one—only a frost one. It expresses my feelings—that is pretty much all.

Was so glad to hear from you—even a word is valued.

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I know how busy you are, I dont think it strange not to hear more. Howland was here yesterday. Gone today. Thompson was here Saturday—drank tea with us—dont mean to teach in Sunderland after this week. I have tried Dr Jackson's prescription and find myself better for it. I have used it all up now, and wish you would get me some more at the same place if you can. Father has the Recipe, and will give it to you. I should like to have you get *three or four* times the quantity contained in the Recipe, as it is so good an opportunity, and I think it benefits me much. Martha sends her love—is well. Bowdoin is better and back again. Spencer is very sick, and will probably not live long.

You will be here soon dear Austin, and then away with my pen. Dont get sick these cool days when fevers are around! Vinnie's love—not that she cares particularly about *seeing* Edmund Converse, but after what was said, she only wanted to be polite, that's all. Our regards to Mr McCurdy, if you are a mind to give them. Love—

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Tuesday noon. Lavinia has added a note on the same sheet.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 183–184.

The girls had not met Edmund W. Converse, a Boston acquaintance of Austin's, when they visited Austin in September. John Laurens Spencer died, 12 October 1851, aged 33.

56

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

9 October 1851

I wept a tear here, Susie, on purpose for *you*—because this "sweet silver moon" smiles in on me and Vinnie, and then it goes so far before it gets to you—and then you never told me if there *was* any moon in Baltimore—and how do I know Susie—that you see her sweet face at all? She looks like a fairy tonight, sailing around the sky in a little silver gondola with stars for gondoliers. I asked her to let me ride a little while ago—and told her I would *get out* when she got as far as Baltimore, but she only smiled to herself and went sailing on.

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I think she was quite ungenerous — but I have learned the lesson and shant ever ask her again. To day it rained at home — sometimes it rained so hard that I fancied you could hear it's patter — patter, patter, as it fell upon the leaves — and the fancy pleased me so, that I sat and listened to it — and watched it earnestly. *Did* you hear it Susie — or was it *only* fancy? Bye and bye the sun came out — just in time to bid us goodnight, and as I told you sometime, the moon is shining now.

It is such an evening Susie, as you and I would walk and have such pleasant musings, if you were only here — perhaps we would have a "Reverie" after the form of "Ik Marvel," indeed I do not know why it wouldnt be just as charming as of that lonely Bachelor, smoking his cigar — and it would be far more profitable as "Marvel" *only* marvelled, and you and I would *try* to make a little destiny to have for our own. Do you know that charming man is dreaming *again*, and will wake pretty soon — so the papers say, with *another* Reverie — more beautiful than the first?

Dont you hope he will live as long as you and I do — and keep on having dreams and writing them to us; what a charming old man he'll be, and how I envy his grandchildren, little "Bella" and "Paul"! We will be willing to die Susie — when such as *he* have gone, for there will be none to interpret these lives of our's.

Longfellow's "golden Legend" has come to town I hear — and may be seen *in state* on Mr. Adams' bookshelves. It always makes me think of "Pegasus in the pound" — when I find a gracious author sitting side by side with "Murray" and "Wells" and "Walker" in that renowned store — and like *him* I half expect to hear that they have "*flown*" some morning and in their native ether revel all the day; but for our sakes dear Susie, who please ourselves with the fancy that we are the only poets, and everyone else is *prose*, let us hope they will yet be willing to share our humble world and feed upon such aliment as *we* consent to do!

You thank me for the Rice cake — you tell me Susie, you have just been tasting it — and how happy I am to send you anything you love — how hungry you must grow before it is noon there — and then you must be faint from teaching those stupid scholars. I fancy you very often descending to the schoolroom with a plump Binomial Theorem struggling in your hand which you must dissect and exhibit to your incomprehending ones — I hope you whip them Susie — for *my* sake

— whip them *hard* whenever they dont behave just as you want to have them! I know they are very dull — sometimes — from what Mattie says — but I presume you encourage them and forgive all their mistakes. It will teach you *patience* Susie — you may be sure of that. And Mattie tells me too of your evening carousals — and the funny frights you give in personating the Master — just like you Susie — like you for all the world — how Mr Payson would laugh if I could only tell him, and then those great dark eyes — how they would glance and sparkle! Susie — have all the fun wh' you possibly can — and laugh as often and sing, for tears are plentier than smiles in this little world of our's; only dont be so happy as to let Mattie and me grow dimmer and dimmer and finally fade away, and merrier maids than we smile in our vacant places!

Susie, *did* you think that I would never write you when you were gone away — what made you? I am sure you know my promise far too well for that — and had I never said so — I should be *constrained* to write — for what shall separate us from any whom we love — not "*hight nor depth*" . . .

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 5). Ink. Dated: Thursday Evening. End of letter missing.

PUBLICATION: FF 205-208.

According to ED's letter to Austin of 1 October, she had written to Sue once before, on 29 September. *Reveries of a Bachelor* (1850) by Ik Marvel (Donald G. Mitchell) was a bestseller. Longfellow's *Golden Legend* had recently been published. Lindley Murray, William Harvey Wells, and John Walker were compilers of language texts.

To Austin Dickinson

10 October 1851

Dear Austin.

Father says he came down upon you so unexpectedly that you hardly had time to recover from your surprise before he was *off again* — he says you were so astonished that you hardly knew what to say — he thinks you are not very well, and I feel so anxious about you that I cannot rest until I have written to you and given you some advice. They say Mr Sweetser is going — he may not and he may. I will con-

clude to risk him. I am very sorry indeed that your eyes have been so troublesome. I really hope they are better and will trouble you no more. You ought to be very careful about using them *any* now—I do not care if you *never* write me a letter, if you'll only spare your eyes until they have got better. I would not spend much strength upon those little school boys—you will need it all for something better and braver, after you get away. It would rejoice my heart, if on some pleasant morning you'd turn the schoolroom key on Irish boys—Nurse and all, and walk away to freedom and the sunshine here at home. Father says all Boston would not be a temptation to you another year—I wish it would not tempt you to stay another day. Oh Austin, it is wrong to tantalize you so while you are braving *all things* in trying to fulfill duty. Duty is black and brown—home is bright and shining, “and the spirit and the bride say *come*, and let him that” wandereth come—for “behold all things are ready!” We are having such lovely weather—the air is as sweet and still, now and then a gay leaf falling—the crickets sing all day long—high in a crimson tree a belated bird is singing—a thousand little painters are ting[e]ing hill and dale. I admit *now*, Austin, that autumn is *most* beautiful, and spring is but the least—yet they “differ as *stars*” in their distinctive glories. How happy if you were here to share these pleasures with us—the fruit should be more sweet, and the dying day more golden—merrier the falling nut, if with you we gathered it and hid it down deep in the abyss of basket; but you complain not—wherefore do we? I had a long letter from Sue last Tuesday evening and Mat had one that day and came down here to read it—we had a beautiful time reading about Susie and talking of [*words erased*] the good times of last summer—and we anticipated—boasted ourselves of tomorrow [*one line erased*] the future we created, and all of us went to ride in an air bubble for a carriage. We have made all our plans for you and us [*words erased*] in another year—we cherish all the past—we glide adown the present, awake, yet dreaming, but the *future* of ours *together*—there the birds sing *loudest*, and the sun shines *always* there.

Martha and I are very much together—we fill each niche of time with statues of you and Sue and in return for this, they smile beautiful smiles down from their dwelling places. Martha wears the charm when she goes out calling, and many a eulogium is passed upon your gift. Sue says in her letter she has had a “brief letter from you”—

wont you write her a longer? Father says you wear a white hat, cocked up at the sides—know I shall like it's looks and want so much to see it—as for the *wearer*, I want to see him too—but which the *most*, prithee?

Father says you ate little dinner when you dined with him—he did'nt know whether you were not hungry, or whether it was *astonishment* at encountering him—I *hope* the latter. You must get better fast—we shall have a busy day for you on Cattle Show day. We have had some sweet cider—I drank your health. I thank you for the vial. I had a dissertation from Eliza Coleman a day or two ago—dont know which was the author—Plato, or Socrates—rather think Jove had a finger in it. Abby Wood has not come—Emerson and Dickinson have been threatened with fevers, but are better now. Spencer is still alive, but cannot linger long. He is sick at Dea Haskell's—his mother is here. Mother came home yesterday—had a pleasant visit at Monson. They all send their love. Vinnie sends her's. How soon you will be here! Days, flee away—“lest with a whip of *scorpions* I overtake your lingering!”

I am in a hurry—this pen is too slow for me—“it hath done what it could.”

Your aff  
Emily

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Friday morning. Envelope addressed: William Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross./31—Milk St./Boston./Mass./Mr Sweetser./[*in another hand*: American House].

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 93–95, in part; *L* (1931) 92–93, in part; *Home* 184–186, entire.

The passages dealing with Sue were at some time badly mutilated. For the quoted lines near the end, see letter no. 17.

To Austin Dickinson

17 October 1851

We are waiting for breakfast, Austin, the meat and potato and a little pan of your favorite brown bread are keeping warm at the fire, while father goes for shavings.

While we were eating supper Mr Stephen Church rang the door



bell very violently and offered to present us with *three barrels of shavings*. We are much overcome by this act of magnanimity and father has gone this morning to claim his proffered due. He wore a palm leaf hat, and his pantaloons tucked in his boots and I couldnt help thinking of *you* as he strode along by the window.

I dont think "neglige" quite becoming to so mighty a man. I had rather a jacket of green and your barndoor apparel, than all the mock simplicity of a lawyer and a man. The breakfast is so warm and pussy is here a singing and the teakettle sings too as if to see which was loudest and I am so afraid lest kitty should be beaten — yet a *shadow* falls upon my morning picture — where is the youth so bold, the bravest of our fold, a seat is empty here — spectres sit in your chair and now and then nudge father with their long, bony elbows. I wish you were here dear Austin — the dust falls on the bureau in your deserted room and gay, frivolous spiders spin away in the corners. I dont go there after dark whenever I can help it, for the twilight seems to pause there and I am half afraid, and if ever I have to go, I hurry with all my might and never look behind me for I know who I should see.

Before next Tuesday — Oh before the coming stage will I not brighten and brush it, and open the long closed blinds, and with a sweeping broom will I not bring each spider down from its home so high and tell it it may come back again when master has gone — and oh I will bid it to be a tardy spider, to tarry on the way, and I will think my eye is fuller than sometimes, tho' *why* I cannot tell, when it shall rap on the window and come to live again. I am so happy when I know how soon you are coming that I put away my sewing and go out in the yard to think. I have tried to delay the frosts, I have coaxed the fading flowers, I thought I *could* detain a few of the crimson leaves until you had smiled upon them, but their companions call them and they cannot stay away — you will find the blue hills, Austin, with the autumnal shadows silently sleeping on them, and there will be a glory lingering round the day, so you'll know autumn has been here, and the *setting sun* will tell you, if you dont get home till evening. How glad I am you are well — you must try hard to be careful and not get sick again. I hope you will be better than ever you were in your life when you come home *this time*, for it never seemed so long since we have seen you. I thank you for such a long letter, and yet if I might choose, *the next* should be a longer. I think a letter just about

*three days* long would make me happier than any other kind of one — if you please, dated at Boston, but thanks be to our Father, you may conclude it *here*. Everything has changed since my other letter — the doors are shut this morning, and all the kitchen wall is covered with chilly flies who are trying to warm themselves — poor things, they do not understand that there are no summer mornings remaining to them and me and they have a bewildered air which is really very droll, didnt one feel *sorry* for them. You would say t'was a gloomy morning if you were sitting here — the frost has been severe and the few lingering leaves seem anxious to be going and wrap their faded cloaks more closely about them as if to shield them from the chilly northeast wind. The earth looks like some poor old lady who by dint of pains has bloomed c'en till *now*, yet in a forgetful moment a few silver hairs from out her cap come stealing, and she tucks them back so hastily and thinks nobody *sees*. The cows are going to pasture and little boys with their hands in their pockets are whistling to try to keep warm. Dont think that the sky will frown so the day when you come home! She will smile and look happy, and be full of sunshine *then* — and even *should* she frown upon her child returning, there is *another* sky ever serene and fair, and there is *another* sunshine, tho' it be darkness there — never mind faded forests, Austin, never mind silent fields — *here* is a little forest whose leaf is ever green, here is a *brighter* garden, where not a frost has been, in its unfading flowers I hear the bright bee hum, prithce, my Brother, into *my* garden come!

Your very aff  
Sister.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Friday morning. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson/Care of Joel Norcross — 31 — Milk St./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Oct 17. Enclosed with the letter is a slip of paper to which is attached a pressed leaf, with the note: "We'll meet again as heretofore some summer's morning."

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 95-97; LL 165-167, in part; L (1931) 93-96; *Home* 190-191.

Austin was planning to come to Amherst for the annual "Cattle Show," to be held on October 22, and to bring with him his friend Edmund W. Converse. To many of the people of Amherst the autumn fair was the most important public event of the year, and the Dickinsons participated fully in it. On this occasion a dinner was served to two hundred and seventy-

five people at the Amherst House, after which Edward Dickinson gave a history of the Hampshire Agricultural Society. The poem at the end of the letter is printed here, as ED wrote it, in prose form.

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To Austin Dickinson

25 October 1851

Dear Austin.

I've been trying to think this morning how many weeks it was since you went away—I fail in calculations—it seems so long to me since you went back to school that I set down days for years, and weeks for a *score* of years—not reckoning time “by minutes” I don't know what to think of such great discrepancies between the *actual* hours and those which “seem to be.” It may seem long to *you* since you returned to Boston—how I wish you could stay and never go back again. Everything is so still here, and the clouds are cold and gray—I think it will rain soon—Oh I am so lonely!

We had a beautiful visit, but it was all too short for we brothers and sisters, and Vinnie and I are dwelling upon the one to come. Thanksgiving is but four weeks, or a little more than four weeks and yet it seems to be a very great way off, when I look forward to it. I have thought you were very sober, since you went away, and I did when you were here, but now you are out of sight, I remember it more frequently, and wonder I didn't ask you if anything troubled you. I hope you are better now. I waked up this morning, thinking that this was the very morning your eyes were to be well, and I really hope that oculist has'nt broken his promise. You must'nt use them much until they get very strong—you need'nt write to us except on a slip of paper, telling us how you are, and whether you are happy—and I wouldn't write at all, until they were perfectly well.

You had a windy evening going back to Boston, and we thought of you many times and hoped you would not be cold. Our fire burned so cheerfully I couldn't help thinking of how many were *here* and how many were *away*, and I wished so many times during that long evening that the door would open and you come walking in. Home is a holy thing—nothing of doubt or distrust can enter it's blessed portals. I feel it more and more as the great world goes on and one and another forsake, in whom you place your trust—here seems indeed to

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be a bit of Eden which not the sin of *any* can utterly destroy—smaller it is indeed, and it may be less fair, but fairer it is and *brighter* than all the world beside. I hope this year in Boston will not impair your health, and I hope you will be as happy as you used to be before. I don't wonder it makes you sober to leave [this] blessed air—if it were in my power I would on every morning transmit it's purest breaths fragrant and cool to you. How I wish you could have it—a thousand little winds waft it to me this morning, fragrant with forest leaves and bright autumnal berries. I would be *willing* to give you my portion for today, and take the salt sea's breath in it's bright, bounding stead. Now Austin—you have no friend there—why not see Converse often, and laugh and talk with *him*? I think him a noble fellow—it seems to me so pleasant for you to talk with somebody, and he is much like you in many thoughts and feelings. I know he would love to have you for a comrade and friend, and I would be with him a good deal if I were you. Mother feels quite troubled about those little boys—fears you will kill one sometime when you are punishing him—for *her sake* be careful! Emily Fowler and Mat were here all afternoon yesterday—never saw Emily F—— when she seemed more sincere—shall go and see her soon—Mat misses *you* so much, and her dear sister Susie. Henry Root was here all evening. Mother's and Vinnie's love. Remember us to Converse—take care of *yourself*—

Your aff

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Saturday noon. Addressed on the fold: For my brother Austin.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 89–90, in part; L (1931) 87–88, in part; *Home* 193–194, entire.

Austin's visit at home lasted only two days, and he and his friend Converse left on October 23.

60

To Austin Dickinson

30 October 1851

Dear Austin.

Something seems to whisper “he is thinking of home this evening,” perhaps because it rains—perhaps because it's evening and the orches-

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tra of winds perform their strange, sad music. I would'nt wonder if home were thinking of him, and it seems so natural for one to think of the other — perhaps it is no superstition or omen of this evening — no omen “at all—at all” as Mrs Mack would say.

Father is staying at home the evening is so inclement. Vinnie diverts his mind with little snatches of music, and mother mends a garment to make it snugger for you — and what do you think I do among this family circle — I am thinking of you with all my heart and might, and it just occurs to me to note a few of my tho'ts for your own inspection. “Keeping a diary” is not familiar to me as to your sister Vinnie, but her own bright example is quite a comfort to me, so I'll try.

I waked up this morning thinking for all the world I had had a letter from you — just as the seal was breaking, father rapped at my door. I was sadly disappointed not to go on and read, but when the four black horses came trotting into town, and their load was none the heavier by a tiding for me — I was not disappointed then — it was harder to me than had I been disappointed. I have got over it now tho'. I have been thinking all day of how I would break the seal and how gallantly I would read when my letter came, and when it *did'nt* come, I found I had made no provision for any such time as that, but I wont chide you Austin. I know you will write me soon — perhaps your eyes disturb you and will not let you write. I should be unkind to have so much importunity. Dont you wish you were here tonight? — Oh I know I wish so, and all the rest of them too. I find I miss you more “when the lamps are lighted,” and when the winds blow high and the great angry raindrops clamor against the window. Your room is snug and cozy thro' these chilly evenings — I really hope it is — and I hope the stove is singing the merry song of the wood, and how are the cigars — “pretty comfortable” say, now? The weather has been unpleasant ever since you went away. Monday morning we waked up in the midst of a furious snow storm — the snow was the depth of an inch — oh it looked so wintry — bye and bye the sun came out, but the wind blew violently and it grew so cold that we gathered all the quinces — put up the stove in the sitting room, and bade the world Good bye. Kind clouds came on at evening, still the sinking thermometer gave terrible signs of what would be on the morning — at last the morning came laden with mild south winds, and the winds have brought the rain — so here we are. I hope your eyes are better. I have been feeling

anxious since we have heard from you lest they might not be as well and had prevented your writing. Your very hasty letter just at your return rejoiced us — that you were “better — happier — heartier” — what made you think of such beautiful words to tell us how you were, and how cheerful you were feeling? It did us a world of good — how little the scribe thinks of the value of his line — how many eager eyes will search it's every meaning — how much swifter the strokes of “the little mystic clock, no human eye hath seen, which ticketh on and ticketh on, from morning until e'en.” If it were not that I could write you — you could not go away, *therefore* — pen and ink are very excellent things!

We had new *brown bread* for tea — when it came smoking on and we sat around the table, how I did wish a slice could be reserved for you. I fell at once to thinking perhaps Mrs Reed had brown bread, and oh I *hoped* she had, and I hoped you were well and hungry so that you could enjoy it. You shall have as many loaves as we have eaten *slices* if you will but come home. This suggests Thanksgiving — you will soon be here — then I cant help thinking of how when we rejoice — so many hearts are breaking, next Thanksgiving day. What will you say, Austin, if I tell you that Jennie Grout and merry Martha Kingman will spend the day above? They are not here — “while we delayed to let them forth, angels beyond stayed for them.”

It *cannot* be — yet it is so — Jennie Grout was buried yesterday — Martha Kingman died at four o'clock this morning — one and another, and another — how we pass away! Did you know that Merrick in Mr Colton's shop was engaged to Jane Grout? The poor fellow is quite heart broken — he walked to the grave with her parents, and was prayed for as one deeply afflicted in the funeral prayer. I dont know of any one very sick just now. Did you know that Helen Humphry was going to be married soon to Mr Stoddard of the “Stoddard and Lathrop” firm — Northampton — it is so! Mother and Vinnie and Martha send you their love. Will you remember us to Mr Converse — will you tell your friend McCurdy how sorry [we were] he could'nt come? Now Austin, mark me, in four weeks from today we are all happy again!

Your aff  
Emily



MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Thursday Evening. Envelope addressed: Wm Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross./31 - Milk St./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Oct 31.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 97-99, in part; *LL* 168-169, in part; *L* (1931) 96-97, in part; *Home* 194-196, entire.

For Mrs. Mack, see Appendix 2. Jane B. Grout died, 27 October 1851, aged 19. A poem, "The Life Clock," translated from the German, was published in the *Hampshire Gazette* (4 August 1846) and in the *Northampton Courier* (14 July 1847). The first stanza reads:

There is a little mystic clock,  
No human eye hath seen,  
That beateth on and beateth on  
From morning until e'en.

61

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

about 1851

It has been a long week dear Emily, for I have not seen your face, but I have contrived to think of you very much indeed, which has half reconciled me to not seeing you for so long. I was coming several times, but the snow would start the first, and then the paths were damp, and then a friend would drop in to chat, and the short afternoon was gone, before I was aware. Did Mr Dickinson give you a message from me? He promised to be faithful, but I dont suppose Divines think *earthly* loves of much consequence. My flowers come in *my* stead, today, dear Emily. I hope you will love to see them, and whatever word of love, or welcome kindly, you would extend to *me*, "do even so to *them*." They are small, but so full of meaning, if they only mean the *half* of what I bid them.

Very affy,  
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL. Ink. Dated: Saturday noon.

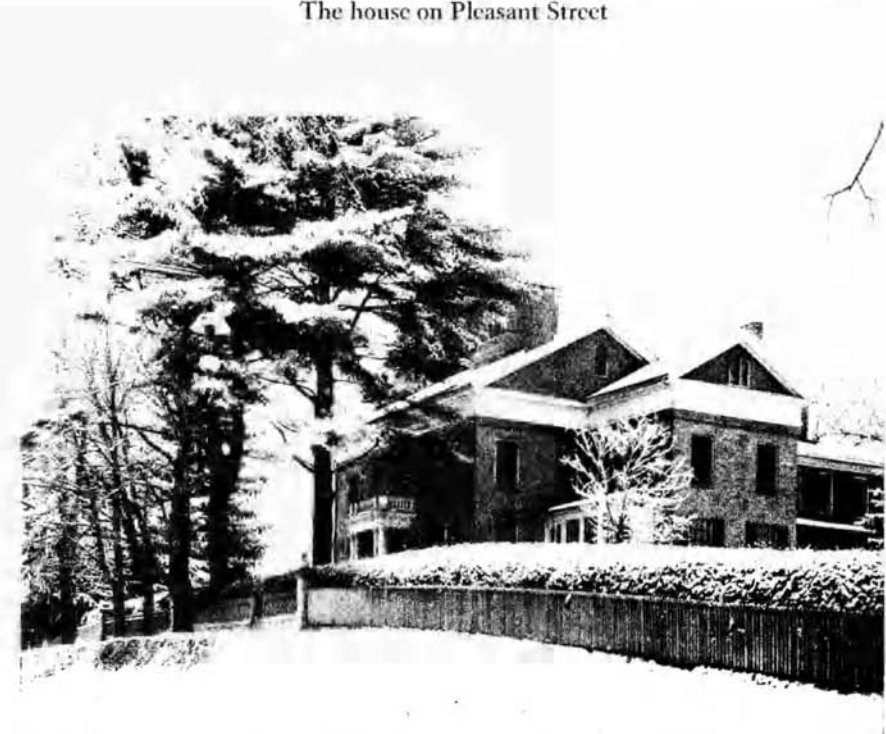
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 136; *L* (1931) 135-136.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Delivered by hand, the note is inscribed on the outer fold: Dear Emily. William Cowper Dickinson, here mentioned, was a tutor at Amherst College.

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The house on Pleasant Street



The Dickinson homestead



William Austin Dickinson



Lavinia Norcross Dickinson



Susan Huntington Gilbert (Dickinson)



Martha Isabella Gilbert (Smith)



John L. Graves



Elizabeth Chapin Holland

To Austin Dickinson

11 November 1851

I cant write but a word, dear Austin, because its already noon and Vinnie is waiting to go to the office for me, and yet a *single word* may be of comfort to you as you go travelling on. It should be a word big and warm and full of sweet affection if I could make it so—Oh it should fill that room, that small and lonely chamber with a thousand kindly things and precious ministrations—I wonder if it *will*, for know that if it *does* not, it is bad and disobedient and a most unworthy type of its affectionate mistress! I was to write last night, but company detained me—Martha came this morning and spent the forenoon with us, or I had written more than I'm afraid I *can* now, the time flies so fast. I said to Martha this morning that I was going to write and we decided between us that it would make you happier to have us talk about you and wish you could be here, and write you more again. Mattie sends you her love—she thinks a great deal of you—I enjoy seeing her so much, because we are both bereaved, and can sorrow on together, and Martha loves you, and we both love Susie, and the hours fly so fast when we are talking of you.

I watched the stage coach yesterday until it went away, and I hoped you would turn around, so to be sure and see me—I didn't mind the rain which sometimes pelted me with a big drop, nor the sharp westerly wind. I only thought to me that should you turn around for a last look at home and I should not be there, I never could forgive me. I thought you saw me once, the way I told was *this*. You know your cap was black, and where it had been black, it all at once grew *white*, and I fancied *that* was *you*.

How lonely it was last night when the chilly wind went down, and the clear, cold moon was shining—it seemed to me I could pack this little earthly bundle, and bidding the world Goodbye, fly away and away, and never come back again to be so lonely here, and then I thought of "Hepzibah" how sorrowful *she* was, and how she longed to sleep, because the grave was peaceful, yet for affection's sake, and for the sake of "Clifford" she wearied on, and bye and bye, kind angels took both of them home, and it seemed almost a lesson, given us to learn. I dont mean that you are *him*, or that Hepzibah's *me* except in a relative sense, only I was reminded.



You are not alone, dear Austin, warm hearts are beating for you, and at mention of your name, brighter beams the eye—you *must not* be despondent—no, Austin, I cannot have you—don't think of the present—the present is unkind, but the future loves you—it sees you a great way off and runs to meet you—"my son was dead, and lives again—he was lost and is found!" I was thinking of you last night—I dropped asleep thinking of you. Lo, I *dreamed*, and the world was no more *this* world, but a world bright and fair—no fading leaves, no dying friends, and I heard a voice saying there shall be no more tears, neither any crying, and they answered, *nevermore*, and up from a thousand hearts went a cry of praise and joy and great thanksgiving, and I awoke, yet I know the place was heaven, and the people singing songs were those who in their *lifetimes* were parted and separated, and their joy was because they should never be so any more. Good bye, dear Austin, yet why Good bye, are you not with me always—whether I wake or sleep? "And tho *all others* do, yet will not *I* forsake thee!"

Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Tuesday noon. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross./31—Milk St. Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Nov 11.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 198–199.

Austin came unexpectedly to Amherst to vote on election day, Monday, November 10, and returned to Boston that afternoon. Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, in which Clifford Pyncheon and his sister Hepzibah are principal characters, was published in the spring of 1851.

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To Austin Dickinson

16 November 1851

Dear Austin.

We have just got home from meeting—it is very windy and cold—the hills from our kitchen window are just crusted with snow, which with their blue mantillas makes them seem so beautiful. You sat just here last Sunday, where I am sitting now and our voices were nimbler than our pens can be, if they try never so hardly. I should be quite sad today, thinking about last Sunday didn't another Sabbath

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smile at me so pleasantly, promising me on it's word to present you here again when "six days work is done."

Father and mother sit in state in the sitting room perusing such papers only, as they are well assured have nothing carnal in them. Vinnie is eating an apple which makes me think of gold, and accompanying it with her favorite [New York] Observer, which if you recollect, deprives us many a time of her sisterly society. Pussy has'nt returned from the afternoon assembly, so you have us all just as we are at present. We were very glad indeed to hear from you so soon, glad that a cheerful fire met you at the door. I *do* well remember how chilly the west wind blew, and how everything shook and rattled before I went to sleep, and I often tho't of you in the midnight car, and hoped you were not lonely. I wished that "Jim" was there to keep you pleasant company, or rather that you were *here*, soundly asleep and adream.

How farcical it seems to sit here a writing, when another Sunday's sun shall shine upon us all in each other's society, and yet thanks to a being inventing paper and pen, they are better far than nothing! By means of them indeed, 'tis little I can tell you, but I can tell how much I would if I could, and there's something comforting in it. We are thinking most of Thanksgiving, than anything else just now—how full will be the circle, less then by none—how the things will smoke, how the board will groan with the thousand savory viands—how when the day is done, Lo the evening cometh, laden with merrie laugh, and happy conversation, and then the sleep and the dream each of a knight or "Ladie"—how I love to see them, a beautiful company, coming down the hill which men call the Future, with their hearts full of joy, and their hands of gladness. Thanksgiving *indeed*, to a family united, once more together before they go away! "Both together" it says, "one taken, the other left."

Col' Kingman's other daughter died yesterday—her funeral is tomorrow. Oh what a house of grief must be their's today—the grass not growing green above the grave of Martha, before little Ellen is laid close beside. I don't know but they are the happier, and we who longer stay the more to be sorrowed for.

Mr [William] Tyler preached this PM—a sermon concerning Spencer, of which you heard us speak when you were here. A beautiful memorial of his life and character, and preached by the request of Spencer's friends in the village. Martha was here on Friday and we

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had a beautiful hour to sit and talk together. Martha becomes far dearer to me with every week and day — her's is a spirit as beautiful and pure as one will seldom meet in a world like our's, and it is all the lovelier because it is so *rare*. Martha inquired for you, as she never comes *without* doing, and sends the weekly love which I always bring, and which I love to bring, if it makes you happier. I hope you are encouraged since you were at home — *do not* be lonely. Susie is lonely, and Martha, and I am lonely too, and this is a lonely world, in the cheer-fullest aspects of it. We will not live here always — but [?] will dwell together beyond the bright blue sky, where "they live whom we call dear." The winter will fly swiftly, then will be the spring — think of nothing but hope — heed nothing but anticipation — "the griefs of the present moment are not to be compared with the joys which are hereafter." Bye and bye you are coming home — so is Susie — so is joy and gladness, which have been staying away just as long as you have. Don't mind the days — some of them are long ones but who cares for length when breadth is in store for him, or who minds the cross, who *knows* he'll have a crown? I wish I could imbue you with all the strength and courage which can be given men — I wish I could assure you of the constant remembrance of those you leave at home — I wish, but Oh how vainly, that I could bring you back again, and never more to stray! You are tired *now* Dear Austin, with my incessant din, but I can't help saying any of these things.

The very warmest love from Vinnie and every one of us. I am *never* ready to go —

Reluctant Emily

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday afternoon. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Nov 17.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 100–101, in part; *L* (1931) 98–99, in part; *Home* 199–201, entire.

Martha Kingman died on October 30, and Ellen on November 15. The last quotation echoes Romans 8.18.

To Austin Dickinson

20 November 1851

I can't write but a syllable, Austin, my letter ought to be in — it is 2 o'clock even now, but I do want to thank you for what I read last evening — I want you to know we think of you every morning and noon, I want to tell you that Father is not at home this week, therefore you do not hear concerning your plans from him. He went to Greenfield Monday, uncertain whether he'd get home *that* day, or two days after. We had a letter yesterday saying he will come home *today*, and I presume he will write you immediately upon his getting home. If I am *selfish* Austin, I tell you you *must come home* — it seems a good many days to take from your little visit, but *you* know better than I what is best about it. Father will be at Boston, and I think he seems inclined to have you wait the Convention. I hope and Vinnie hopes, you won't decide to stay. Are you willing to get me once more, *two or three times this prescription*, and bring it when you come? I have seen much of Mattie since you went away — she is here most every day. Susie has sent me a letter which has been lost on the way — I have had a note from her this week. So many things to tell you, but will not write them now — *rather — tell them* — dear Austin, it will be soon!

Love from all and me more  
Emily

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Thursday noon. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson/Care of Joel Norcross./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Nov 20.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 202.

Edward Dickinson was a delegate to the Whig Convention on November 25. Austin, at his father's desire, stayed in Boston for the occasion, and went home on November 26, the day before Thanksgiving.

To Austin Dickinson

15 December 1851

Did you think I was *tardy*, Austin? For two Sunday afternoons, it has been so cold and cloudy that I didn't feel in my very happiest

mood, and so I did not write until next monday morning, determining in my heart never to write to you in any but cheerful spirits.

Even this morning Austin, I am not in merry case, for it snows slowly and solemnly, and hardly an outdoor thing can be seen a stirring—now and then a man goes by, with a large cloak wrapped around him and shivering at that, and now and then a stray kitten out on some urgent errand creeps thro' the flakes, and crawls so fast as *may* crawl half frozen away. I am glad for the sake of your body that you are not here this morning, for it is a trying time for fingers and toes, for for the heart's sake, I would verily have you *here*—you know there *are* winter mornings when the cold *without* only adds to the warm *within*, and the more it snows and the harder it blows, brighter the fires blaze, and chirps more merrily the "cricket on the hearth"; it is hardly cheery enough for such a scene this morning, and yet methinks it *would* be if you were only here. The future full of sleighrides would chase the gloom from our minds, which only deepens and darkens with every flake that falls.

Black Fanny would "toe the mark" if you should be here tomorrow, but as the prospects are, I presume Black Fanny's hoofs will not attempt to fly. Do you have any snow in Boston? Enough for a ride, I hope, for the sake of "Auld Lang Syne." Perhaps the "Ladie" of curls, would not object to a drive. So you took Miss Mary to The Mercantile—Vinnie is quite excited about her going to Boston, and things are turning out "just as she expected." Father remarked "he was very glad of it—he thought it would please the *old folks* to have the school master pay respect to their darter." I think that "heavy cold" must be making progress as that devoted family have not yet been seen, or what is *more* suspicious, heard of.

I am glad you like Miss Nichols, it must be so pleasant for you to have somebody to care for, in such a cheerless place—dont shut yourself away from anyone whom you like, in order to keep the faith to those you leave behind! Your friends here are much happier in fancying *you* happy, than if in a pledge so stern you should refuse all friendliness. Truth to the ones you leave does not demand of you to refuse those whom you find, or who would make your exile a less desolate thing in their cheerful circles. On the contrary, Austin, I am very sure that seclusion from everyone there would make an ascetic of you, rather than restore you brighter and truer to *them*. We miss

you more and more, we do not become accustomed to separation from you. I almost wish sometimes we need'nt miss you so much, since duty claims a year of you entirely to herself, and then again I think that it is pleasant to miss you if you must go away, and I would not have it otherwise, not even if I could. In every pleasure and pain you come up to our minds so wishfully, we know you'd enjoy our joy, and if you were with us Austin, we could bear little trials more cheerfully—then when we have any dainty, someone is sure to say "it is such as *Austin* loves." When I know of anything funny, I am just as apt to cry, far *more* so than to *laugh*, for I know who *loves jokes best*, and who is not here to enjoy them. We dont *have* many jokes tho' *now*, it is pretty much all sobriety, and we do not have much poetry, father having made up his mind that its pretty much all *real life*. Fathers real life and *mine* sometimes come into collision, but as yet, escape unhurt! I give all your messages to Mat—she seems to enjoy every one more than the one before—she was here three afternoons last week, one evening she took tea here with Abby and Abiah Root, and we had such a pleasant time; how I did wish you were here, and so did all the girls—every one of them spoke of it. Did you know that Jane Humphrey's sister [Martha], that you saw at S. Hadley once was dead? They have sent for Jane to come home, I dont know whether she will, she is so far from home. I am so glad you are well, and in such happy spirits—both happy and well is a great comfort to us when you are far away.

Emilie.

Thank you for the music Austin, and thank you for the books. I have enjoyed them very much. I shall learn my part of the Duett, and try to have Vinnie her's. She is very much pleased with Charity.

She would write you now but is busy getting her lesson.

Mother is frying Doughnuts—I will give you a little platefull to have warm for your tea! *Imaginary* ones—how I'd love to send you *real* ones.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Monday morning. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./Boston./Mass. The letter was delivered by hand.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 102–104, in part; *LL* 172–173, in part; *L* (1931) 100–101, in part; *Home* 208–210, entire, where it is dated January 12.



Austin returned to Boston on Monday, December 1. The second Monday after his departure is recorded in Lavinia's diary as a "snowy, gloomy day." During the interval Abiah Root had been visiting her cousins the Palmers. The evening she spent at the Dickinsons' with Abby Wood and Martha Gilbert was Emily's twenty-first birthday. "Miss Mary" was Mary Warner. Martha Humphrey died on 10 December, aged twenty.

To Austin Dickinson

24 December 1851

Dont tell them, *will* you Austin; they are all asleep soundly and I snatch the silent night to speak a word to you. Perhaps *you* are sound asleep, and I am only chatting to the *semblance* of a man ensconced in warmest blankets and deep, downy pillows. I am afraid not, dear Austin, I'm afraid that dreadful pain will keep you wide awake all this dreary night, and so afraid am I, that I steal from happy dreams and come to sit with you. Since your letter came, we have thought so much about you, Oh more, *many* more than pen and ink can tell you — we are thinking of you *now* midst the night so wild and stormy. Austin, I hav'nt a doubt that Vinnie and mother are dreaming *even now* of you, tho' Vinnie was so sleepy the last time she opened her eye, and mother has had a very fatiguing day. And you know that I do, *dont* you, or I should'nt incur such perils for the sake of seeing you. Hav'nt you taken cold, or exposed yourself in some way, or got too tired, teaching those useless boys? — I am so sorry for you. I do wish it was *me*, that you might be well and happy, for I have no profession, and have such a snug, warm home that I had as lief suffer some, a great deal rather than not, that by doing so, you were exempted from it. May I change places, Austin? I dont care how sharp the pain is, not if it dart like arrows, or pierce bone and bone like the envenomed barb, I should be twice, *thrice* happy to bear it in your place. Dont try to teach school at all, until you get thoroughly well! The committee will excuse you, I *know* they will, they *must*; tell them if they dont I will tell the Mayor of them and get them all turned out! I am glad to know you are prudent in consulting a physician; I hope he will do you good; has anyone with neuralgia, tried him, that recommended

him to you? I think that warmth and rest, cold water and care, are the best medicines for it. I know you can get all these, and be your own physician, which is far the better way.

Now Austin, I cant come, I have no horse to fetch me, I can only advise you of what I think is good, and ask you if you will do it. Had I the art and skill of the greatest of all physicians, and had under my care whole hospitals of patients, I could'nt feel more anxious than in this single case; I do feel so desirous of a complete recovery!

But lest I harm my patient with too much conversation on sickness and pain, I pass to themes more cheerful and reminiscence gay. I know it would make you laugh to see Vinnie sleeping as soundly as a poker, and shovel and pair of tongs, and Cousin Emily Norcross bringing up the rear in a sleep twice as sound and full twice as sonorous, and there come snatches of music from away in mother's room, which wake a funny response in my amused being. I can think of nothing funnier than for intelligent beings to bid the world good night, and go out with their candles, and there's nothing that I enjoy more than rousing these self-same beings and witnessing their discomfiture at the *bare idea* of morning, when they're so sleepy yet!

Vinnie thinks me quite savage, and frequently suggests the propriety of having me transported to some barbarous country, where I may meet with those of a similar nature, and allow her to spend her days — that is, such small remainder as my inhumanity spares — in comparative ease and quietness!

She thinks ancient martyrs very trifling indeed and would *welcome* the stake in preference to the sunrise, and that shrill morning call she may be sure to hear!

A'nt you sorry for her; she thinks of your sympathies often, and thinks they would all be hers, if they were nearer home.

Father will come tomorrow, and I will take care of Mat. Had a "merry Christmas" from Sue, besides some beautiful gifts for Vinnie and me, Monday evening. We are having a cozy, rosy, posy little visit with Cousin Emily — enjoy it very much, would love to have you here, if it might be possible. I was glad you remembered Emily, it pleased her very much. Why did you apologize for any of your letters? Coming from you, Austin, they never can be otherwise than delightful to us; better than that you give us, we shall never desire.

Write to us very soon, and say how you are, and be very careful indeed, and dont write but a little, if you find it pains you. Much love.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Wednesday night. 12 o'clock. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson/Care of Joel Norcross. 31. Milk St./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Dec 25.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 204-206.

ED's Mount Holyoke roommate, Emily Norcross, was the cousin now visiting them. Edward Dickinson was in Monson, the home of the Norcross family.

67

To Austin Dickinson

31 December 1851

Late at night, dear Child, but I cant help thinking of you, and am so afraid you are sick—come home tomorrow, Austin, if you are not perfectly sure that you shall be well right away, for you must not suffer there—Vinnie has got her message—We did not get the answer from you—I must not write another word, but Austin, come home, remember, if you are not better right away. Love for you.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross/31. Milk Street/Boston/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jan 1 1852.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 207.

68

To Austin Dickinson

5 January 1852

I will write a word to you, Austin, to send by Mr Watson. I've found your Gaitor shoes, and send them as you desired.

Mary Warner was here on Thursday, has only just got out; influenza is prevalent here—how lucky they took it in Boston, it would have been so vulgar to have imbibed it *here* among the pools and

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pastures! Mary said she had finished "Kavanagh," and would return it immediately, which she has *not* done, or you would receive it now. I should go for it this morning, but it storms and is so icy, that I dare not venture out. You shall have it tho, by the next good opportunity. Mr. *Goodale* left for California, this morning, George Godfrey meets him in New York, Tuesday.

Emiline Kellogg is quite sick—they have very much feared a fever, but she's rather more comfortable now.

You remember our telling you of a Cousin George Dickinson, from New York, who came to Amherst last summer, when you were away. He passed the Sabbath in town, took tea here, and passed the evening, is a fine fellow, and has a great desire to see you. We had a very quiet New Year's, I had as a gift from Mattie, an exquisite "piece of carpeting," similar to one Sue gave you, sometime ago!

I dont know anything of the railroad tho' I fancy "things is workin," and so soon as "things *has* worked" I promise to let you know. I am very glad indeed that you've called upon the Lymans—I think Mary a beautiful person, and will certainly go and see her as soon as she comes to town. I have never known Charlotte at all. Vinnie will tell the Jones' some day when she's out this week.

Mrs Howe has heard from Sabra, she is very happy indeed. Mrs Howe was perfectly delighted with your visit there, the last time you were at home—also Mrs Hartly, and all the tavern gang—have spoken of it frequently, and with much evident pleasure. Goodbye, Austin, hope you are happy and well, and would write much more, but your stockings call me.

Aff yr sister,

Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Monday morning. Addressed on the fold: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 207-208.

ED's familiarity with *Kavanagh* has already been noted. (See letter no. 38.) The book seems to have belonged to Austin. The charter for the Amherst and Belchertown Railroad, to connect Amherst with lines already laid through Palmer, was granted on 24 May 1851.

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To Abiah Root

about January 1852

My very dear Abiah,

I love to sit here alone, writing a letter to you, and whether your joy in reading will amount to as much or more, or even less than mine in penning it to you, becomes to me just now a very important problem — and I will tax each power to solve the same for me; if as happy, indeed, I have every occasion for gratitude — more so, my absent friend, I may not hope to make you, but I do hope most earnestly it may not give you *less*. Oh, I do know it will not, if school-day hearts are warm and school-day memories precious! As I told you, it is Sunday to-day, so I find myself quite curtailed in the selection of subjects, being myself quite vain, and naturally adverting to many worldly things which would doubtless grieve and distress you: much more will I be restrained by the fact that such stormy Sundays I always remain at home, and have not those opportunities for hoarding up great truths which I would have otherwise. In view of these things, Abiah, your kind heart will be lenient, forgiving all empty words and unsatisfying feelings on the Sabbath-day ground which we have just alluded to. I rejoice in one theme appropriate to every place and time — indeed it cannot intrude in the hour most unseemly for every other thought and every other feeling; and sure I am to-day, howe'er it may be holy, I shall not break or reproach by speaking of the links which bind us to each other, and make the very thought of you, and time when I last saw you, a sacred thing to me. And I have many memories, and many thoughts beside, which by some strange entwining, circle you round and round; if you please, a vine of fancies, towards which dear Abiah sustains the part of oak, and as up each sturdy branch there climbs a little tendril so full of faith and confidence and the most holy trust, so let the hearts do also, of the dear "estrays"; then the farther we may be from home and from each other, the nearer by that faith which "overcometh all things" and bringeth us to itself.

Amherst and Philadelphia, separate indeed, and yet how near, bridged by a thousand trusts and a "thousand times ten thousand" the travellers who cross, whom you and I may not see, nor hear the trip of their feet, yet faith tells us they are there, ever crossing and re-crossing. Very likely, Abiah, you fancy me at home in my own little chamber,

writing you a letter, but you are greatly mistaken. I am on the blue Susquehanna paddling down to you; I am not much of a sailor, so I get along rather slowly, and I am not much of a mermaid, though I verily think I shall be, if the tide overtakes me at my present jog. Hard-hearted girl! I don't believe you care, if you did you would come quickly and help me out of this sea; but if I drown, Abiah, and go down to dwell in the seaweed forever and forever, I will not forget your name, nor all the wrong you did me!

Why did you go away and not come to see me? I felt so sure you would come, because you promised me, that I watched and waited for you, and bestowed a tear or two upon my absentee. How very sad it is to have a confiding nature, one's hopes and feelings are quite at the mercy of all who come along; and how very desirable to be a stolid individual, whose hopes and aspirations are safe in one's waistcoat pocket, and *that* a pocket indeed, and one not to be picked!

Notwithstanding your faithlessness I should have come to see you, but for that furious snow-storm; I did attempt in spite of it, but it conquered in spite of me, and I doffed my hood and shawl, and felt very crestfallen the remainder of the day. I did want one more kiss, one sweet and sad good-by, before you had flown away; perhaps, my dear Abiah, it is well that I go without it; it might have added anguish to our long separation, or made the miles still longer which keep a friend away. I always try to think in any disappointment that had I been gratified, it had been sadder still, and I weave from such supposition, *at times*, considerable consolation; consolation upside down as I am pleased to call it.

. . . Shall I have a letter soon — oh, may I very soon, for "some days are dark and dreary, and the wind is never weary."

Emily E.

but my dear child, you know that I do not feel well at sometimes, and when my feelings come, I permit them to overcome me when perhaps I ought not — yet *at the time* submission seems almost inevitable. I will try to get stout and well before you come again, and who says the past shall not be forgiven by the day to come? I say she *shall* be, and that the deeper the crimson, the purer and more like snow the heart repentant, when penitence can come.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. See note 3 in "Notes on the Present Text." All



of the letter above the signature has been published; all below it is unpublished.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 57-60; L (1931) 50-52, dated (presumably by ED): Sunday Evening.

Abiah Root was in Philadelphia from January to June 1852 (see the letter from Mrs. Strong to Mrs. Todd written in 1892-AB 207). She had been visiting her cousins the Palmers in Amherst, and ED is complaining that Abiah did not pay her a goodbye visit. The letter closes with lines which attempt to recall Longfellow's "The Rainy Day" (see letter no. 36).

70

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

21 January 1852

Will you forgive me, Susie, I cannot stay away; and it is not *me only*—that writes the note today—dear Mattie's *heart* is here, tho' her *hand* is not quite strong enough to hold a pen today. I have just come from your home, and I promised Mattie I would write you, and tell you about her. Now dont feel anxious, dear Susie, Mattie is only sick *a little* and Dr Smith and I, are going to cure her right away in a day, and she will be so much stronger than she was before. She has a disordered stomach, and coughs some, which Dr Smith says is owing to the stomach—and more immediately, to a cold she has taken; he says she will soon be well, and she looks so sweet and happy—that could you *see* her, Susie—you would think she was *playing* sick—just to lie in the grand french bedstead and have dear little vials sitting on the stand. I told Mattie this morning—she looked so sweet and patient, and willing to be sick; Mattie looked up so funny, and said she "*was'nt willing*" and I need'nt have any such little notions in reference to her; so my dear Susie, you see she is quite herself, and will be very strong and well in a day or two.

She has'nt got your letter, owing she thinks to the great snow storm, which blocked up all the railroads, and dont give us any mail—and Susie—I am so credulous, and so easily deluded by this fond heart of mine—that I am supposing snow storms have got *my* letter too, and I shant lay it to *you*, but to the wicked *snow storm*, if mine does not come *too*! I told Mattie this morning, that I felt all taken away, without her, or Susie, and indeed I have thought today of what would

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become of me when the "bold Dragon" shall bear you both away, to live in his high mountain—and leave me here alone; and I could have wept bitterly over the only *fancy* of ever being so lone—and then Susie, I thought how these short adieus of our's might—Oh Sue, they *might* grow sadder and longer, and that bye and bye they would not be said any more, not any more *forever*, for that of our precious band, some *one* should pass away.

Such thoughts will come and come—now you are gone away—and I watch your letters Susie, to see if they grow saintlier, and more like Susie *Spirit*, than my dear earthly child. Forgive me a smile, Susie, on a subject near my heart, but for the last few weeks and days—they *are* so evanescent that I cant see them *at all*; dear Susie, *please* be corporal, it would so comfort me! The days dont go very fast—I shall certainly have to *poke* them—if they dont go along; yet they *do* move a *little*, and bounding o'er them all—I meet the glad July—and have you in my arms—Oh Susie—you *shall* come, tho the time be *ever* so long, and go ever so slowly—and I should get so tired, if it was'nt for faith. *You* may have faith *too* Susie—I will not take it all, and *besides*, "eno' and to spare" for Vinnie and Mattie. Susie, dont worry a bit, for Mattie—she is'nt sick but *a little*, and I will write again in two or three days—to tell you she has got well; and when you would love, dear Susie, so would I *better*, to have letter from you.

Emilie

Love, much love!

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 15). Ink. Dated: Wednesday noon. Envelope (YUL) addressed: Miss Susan H Gilbert./Care of Mr Archer./40-Lexington St./Baltimore./Md. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jan 22.

PUBLICATION: FF 209-211, in part.

On January 14 Mattie contracted influenza, then unusually prevalent. She was ill for several weeks, and this letter was written with the purpose of allaying Sue's apprehensions (see no. 71).

71

To Austin Dickinson

28 January 1852

I have just got your letter, Austin, and have read and sat down to answer it almost in a breath, for there's so much I want to say, and so

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little time to say it, that I must be very spry to write you tonight at all.

It has been a long, lonely winter; we do need you at home, and since you have been sick and are away from us, the days seem like *ages*, and I get tired of ever hoping to see you again. It seems to me it would do you a great deal of good to leave school a few days, and come home. We are very anxious to see you, the journey would do you good, and the pure air here, and seeing your old friends would quite restore you. Cant you, Austin? I do wish you would; never mind the boys; if they cant fill your place for a week, just let it be *unfilled*. I dont believe the boy's minds would suffer, or run to waste in such a short space of time, and I do think your health requires it. You may feel so well by the time you get this that you wont think it worth the while in a *hea[l]th* view[?] — but it's a long while since Thanksgiving, and we should like to see you, and perhaps you would like to come. Wont you think of it tonight and follow my good advice into the Fitchburgh Depot, where you will find a ticket to take you home tomorrow? How glad we should all be to see you! I am rejoiced that your face is better, hope it is now well, as t'will be almost three days from the time you wrote to me, when this reaches you.

I dont understand your being troubled with the palpitation so much, but think it must be owing to a disordered system, and too violent exertions in your school, which I would modestly wish at the bottom of the sea, before ever you were engaged in it. I think you need rest, and riding, and perfect freedom from care — *that* you will find here, and Vinnie and I will do everything we *can* to make you happy, if you will make *us* happy by deciding to come. *Generous*, isn't it, offering to make *you* happy, if you'll make *us* so *first*; but in the end, we should *all* be happy, I guess. Poor Mat has been pretty sick, but is recovering now; just a fortnight today since she was taken down.

I am down there a great deal, and spend most all my time in going to see her, thinking of something to carry her, or writing letters to Sue, telling her all about Martha. I had a long letter from Sue last Thursday, and wrote her that day of Mat's sickness, at Mat's request; told her Mat was'nt much sick, had a touch of the influenza and would be out again soon. Poor Sue thought otherwise, concluded Mat was very sick and I had written not so for fear I should alarm her; so yesterday I had the most anxious note from her — she seemed almost distracted lest Mat was sick very, and we were keeping it from her; but

I wrote her immediately, stating how Mat was, and Mrs C[utler] wrote too, so Sue will soon be relieved. You are gone, and Sue; Mat's sickness deprives me of her, and on the whole, Austin, I do feel rather lonely, but you'll all get back at sometime, and if I live till then, I mean to be happy enough to make up for all this lost time. Emiline is still very feeble, sits up only a little, cannot bear the light at all on account of her head, and tho' slowly recovering, is very feeble yet. I went up to see her today — her room is kept so dark that I could'nt see where she was for some time — at last I heard a little faint voice way out in the corner, and found poor Em' out there — she inquired for you — I told her you had been shut up with your face, and she smiled and said "we are all sick at a time." It is five weeks today, since she was taken sick, a long and tedious sickness, but I hope she will soon get well. Her hair is all cut off, and to see her propped up with pillows, you would'nt hardly know her.

Mary Warner and Thurston are getting along nicely, spent last Monday evening, sliding down Boltwood's hill — the very last phase of flirtation. Mary dont seem very flourishing just now — everybody seems to get the idea that she's a little gone by, and faded. Dont be roused by this into the former furie, for Mary and Vinnie and I are on the pleasantest terms in the world. Emily Fowler is visiting Liz Tyler. Abby Wood is as usual; Mr Bliss is confined to the house with one of his old attacks, so the work at "Shanghi" I suppose cannot go forward! Abby brought her work down and staid all Monday forenoon; said she wrote a letter of 16 pages to Eliza Coleman last week, and had just received one of *ten* in return. Dear me, I'm glad I have no such hot correspondents! Only think of it, Abby Wood and Eliza C. Where is Charles Dickens, is all I have tongue to say? Mary Lyman has not come — Mary French is visiting her coz' in Oxford. Prof Haven gave a Lyceum Lecture last evening, upon the deaf and dumb, and the manner of teaching them — it was called very interesting — he gives one at Northampton tonight — the President [Hitchcock] lectures at Springfield this evening, so you see Lyceum Lectures are pretty plenty around here.

Dr Wesselhoeft's bill is correct I presume. He sent Vinnie medicine three or four times, and me twice — and although we were not benefited by it, he probably did the best he could for us, and I'd rather you would pay it, without any words about it, and Vinnie and I will pay

you, when you get home. I dont want any fuss with him. Vinnie and I have tried him and are satisfied that for us the medicine has no power, but I am glad we tried him; we should'nt have *known* without. Go and see him as soon as you can conveniently, Austin; I dont like an unpaid bill.

Mother seems quite delighted at what you said to her about making you a visit — I should'nt be at all surprised should she conclude to go and see you, though of course she has not had time to think at all about it.

I think she is very happy at your mention of her, and desire to see her. I mean she shall go. Vinnie and I have been there so recently, it is not best for us to think of it, but you are very kind, Austin, you do not know how much we all think of you, how much you are missed at home.

I thank you for your letter, it sounds like old times — and makes me feel quite happy, except where you are sick. Mother and Vinnie send their love, and father says he thinks you had better come home for a few days unless you are very much better.

Emilie E.

You sent us the *Duett*, Austin. Vinnie cannot learn it, and I see from the outside page, that there is a piece for *two* hands.

Are you willing to change it. Dont be in haste to send it; any time will do! Shall write when I hear from you, more fully.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Wednesday Evening. Envelope addressed: Wm Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross./31 — Milk Street./Boston/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jan 29. The two final paragraphs of the letter are on a separate slip of paper.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 211–214.

Both Benjamin E. Thurston and Daniel Bliss were seniors in Amherst College. Bliss, who was nearly thirty years old, married Abby Wood in 1855, and went as a missionary to Syria, not to China. Haven's lecture, "The Art of Instructing the Deaf and Dumb," was given on January 27. Dr. William Wesselhöft (1794–1858) was a well-known physician from Germany who practiced medicine in Boston from 1841 until his death.

To Austin Dickinson

6 February 1852

Austin.

I have never left you so long before, since you first went away, but we have had such colds that we could not use our eyes so long as to write a letter, and the privation on our part has been greater, I dare say, than it possibly could — on your's.

I have received both your letters, and enjoyed them both very much; *particularly* the notes on the agricultural convention. Miss Kelly's part of the performance was very fine indeed, and made much fun for us. Should think you must have some *discipline* in order to write so clearly amidst so much confusion. Father seemed specially pleased with the story of the farmer. I am so glad you are better — I wish you might have been spared just for a little visit, but we will try and wait if you dont think best to come, and shall only be the gladder to see you at last. I hope you will be very careful and not get sick again, for it seems to me you've had so much miserable health since you have lived in Boston; if it dont ruin your constitution, I shall be very glad. I am very sorry to hear of the illness of the teachers; I should think you must miss them, they have been with you so long. You will tell us if they are better, when you write home again.

Since we have written you, the grand Rail Road decision is made, and there is great rejoicing throughout this town and the neighboring; that is Sunderland, Montague, and Belchertown. Every body is wide awake, every thing is stirring, the streets are full of people talking cheerily, and you really should be here to partake of the jubilee. The event was celebrated by D. Warner, and cannon; and the silent satisfaction in the hearts of all is it's crowning attestation.

Father is realy *sober* from excessive satisfaction, and bears his honors with a most becoming air. Nobody *believes* it yet, it seems like a fairy tale, a most *miraculous* event in the lives of us all. The men begin working next week, only think of it, Austin; why I verily believe we shall fall down and worship the first "Son of Erin" that comes, and the first sod he turns will be preserved as an emblem of the struggles and victory of our heroic fathers. Such old fellows as Col' Smith *and his wife*, fold their arms complacently, and say, "well, I declare, we have got it after all" — *got it*, you good for nothings! and so we *have*,



in spite of sneers and pities, and insults from all around; and we will *keep* it too, in spite of earth and heaven! How I wish you were here, it is really too bad, Austin, at such a time as now — I miss your big Hurrahs, and the famous stir you make, upon all such occasions; but it is a comfort to know that you are here — that your whole soul is here, and tho' apparently absent, yet present in the highest, and the truest sense. I have got a great deal to say, and I fancy I am saying it in rather a headlong way, but if you can read it, you will know what it means. Martha gets along nicely, was able to have her dress on, and go in the dining room for the first time yesterday. She sends you her love, and will write to you just as soon as [she] is able.

Mother has not decided yet, about going to Boston — seems to think if you are better it is hardly best to go. I will tell you more decide[d]ly when I write again — she would love to do so dearly, but it's a good deal of effort to go away from home at this season, and I hardly know what she will do. Emiline improves slowly. Tutor Howland appeared on Wednesday, and remained in town till today — took tea here Wednesday evening — took Vinnie to ride yesterday morning, spent most of the afternoon here, and is just shutting the gate upon his last farewell, as I write this morning. I have been to ride twice since I wrote you, once with a party, manned by Root & Co. and last evening with *Sophomore Emmons*, alone; will tell you all about it when I write again, for I am in such a hurry that I cannot stop for breath. Take good care of yourself, Austin, and think much of us all, for we do so of you.

Emilie

I send you my prescription again. Will it trouble you too much to get me another bottle, of the same size as the others, namely *twice the quantity*, and send to me by the first person who comes? You are kind very, Austin, to attend to all my little wants, and I'm sure I thank you for it.

April is'nt far off, and then — and then, we are the "merrie men"!

Vinnie sends her love, and mother. Vinnie says she thinks you dont pay much attention to her.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Friday morning. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross./31 — Milk St./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Feb 6. The final three paragraphs are written on a separate strip of paper and on the inside of the envelope flap.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 217 218.

The *Hampshire and Franklin Express* announced on February 6 that the stock of the Amherst and Belchertown Railroad had been fully subscribed. Luke Sweetser was elected president and Edward Dickinson one of the directors.

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

about 6 February 1852

Will you let me come dear Susie — looking just as I do, my dress soiled and worn, my grand old apron, and my hair — Oh Susie, time would fail me to enumerate my appearance, yet I love you just as dearly as if I was e'er so fine, so you wont care, will you? I am so glad dear Susie — that our hearts are always clean, and always neat and lovely, so not to be ashamed. I have been hard at work this morning, and I ought to be working now — but I cannot deny myself the luxury of a minute or two with you.

The dishes may wait dear Susie — and the uncleared table stand, *them* I have always with me, but you, I have "not always" — *why* Susie, Christ hath saints *manie* — and I have *few*, but thee — the angels shant have Susie — no — no no!

Vinnie is sewing away like a *fictitious* scamstress, and I half expect some knight will arrive at the door, confess himself a *nothing* in presence of her loveliness, and present his heart and hand as the only vestige of him worthy to be refused.

Vinnie and I have been talking about growing old, today. Vinnie thinks *twenty* must be a fearful position for one to occupy — I tell her I dont care if I am young or not, had as lief be thirty, and you, as most anything else. Vinnie expresses her sympathy at my "sere and yellow leaf" and resumes her work, dear Susie, tell me how *you* feel — ar'nt there days in one's life when to be old dont seem a thing so sad —

I do feel gray and grim, this morning, and I feel it would be a comfort to have a piping voice, and broken back, and scare little children. Dont *you* run, Susie dear, for I wont do any harm, and I do love you dearly tho' I do feel so frightful.

Oh my darling one, how long you wander from me, how weary I grow of waiting and looking, and calling for you; sometimes I shut

my eyes, and shut my heart towards you, and try hard to forget you because you grieve me so, but you'll never go away, Oh you never will—say, Susie, promise me again, and I will smile faintly—and take up my little cross again of sad—*sad* separation. How vain it seems to *write*, when one knows how to feel—how much more near and dear to sit beside you, talk with you, hear the tones of your voice; so hard to “deny thyself, and take up thy cross, and follow me”—give me strength, Susie, write me of hope and love, and of hearts that *endured*, and great was their reward of “Our Father who art in Heaven.” I don't know how I shall bear it, when the gentle spring comes; if she should come and see me and talk to me of you, Oh it would surely kill me! While the frost clings to the windows, and the World is stern and drear; this absence is easier; the *Earth* mourns too, for all her little birds; but when they all come back again, and she sings and is so merry—pray, what will become of me? Susie, forgive me, forget all what I say, get some sweet little scholar to read a gentle hymn, about Bethlehem and Mary, and you will sleep on sweetly and have as peaceful dreams, as if I had never written you all these ugly things. Never mind the letter Susie, I won't be angry with you if you don't give me any at all—for I know how busy you are, and how little of that dear strength remains when it is evening, with which to think and write. Only *want* to write me, only sometimes sigh that you are far from me, and that will do, Susie! Don't you think we are good and patient, to let you go so long; and don't we think you're a darling, a real beautiful hero, to toil for people, and teach them, and leave your own dear home? Because we pine and repine, don't think we forget the precious patriot at war in other lands! Never be mournful, Susie—be happy and have cheer, for how many of the long days have gone away since I wrote you—and it is almost noon, and soon the night will come, and then there is one less day of the long pilgrimage. Mattie is very smart, talks of you *much*, my darling; I must leave you now—“one little hour of Heaven,” thank who did give it me, and will he also grant me one longer and *more* when it shall please his love—bring Susie home, ie! Love always, and ever, and true!

Emily—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 10). Ink. Dated: Friday forenoon.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 182–184, in part.

The exact date of the letter is uncertain, but its report on Mattie's condition is similar to that of the same date in the preceding letter to Austin, and no other Friday in the month seems to apply as well.

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

about February 1852

It's a sorrowful morning Susie—the wind blows and it rains; “into each life some rain must fall,” and I hardly know which falls fastest, the rain without, or within—Oh Susie, I would nestle close to your warm heart, and never hear the wind blow, or the storm beat, again. Is there any room there for me, or shall I wander away all homeless and alone? Thank you for loving me, darling, and *will* you “love me more if ever you come home”?—it is enough, dear Susie, I know I shall be satisfied. But what can I do towards you?—*dearer* you *cannot* be, for I love you so already, that it almost breaks my heart—perhaps I can love you *anew*, every day of my life, every morning and evening—Oh if you will let me, how happy I shall be!

The precious billet, Susie, I am wearing the paper out, reading it over and o'er, but the dear *thoughts* can't wear out if they try, Thanks to Our Father, Susie! Vinnie and I talked of you all last evening long, and went to sleep mourning for you, and pretty soon I waked up saying “Precious treasure, thou art mine,” and there you were all right, my Susie, and I hardly dared to sleep lest some one steal you away. Never mind the letter, Susie; you have so much to do; just write me every week *one line*, and let it be, “Emily, I love you,” and I will be satisfied!

Your own Emily

Love to Hattie from us all. Dear Mattie is almost well.

Vinnie's love—Mother's—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 22). Ink. Dated: Wednesday morn. Addressed on the fold: Susie. Unpublished.

The first quotation is from Longfellow's “The Rainy Day.” (See letter no. 36.)

To Austin Dickinson

about February 1852

Had a beautiful letter from Sue, on Friday. W<sup>m</sup> Whn' [Washburn] is here yet, strange in so big a world there seems to be no corner for him!

"Dream Life" is not near so great a book as the "Reveries of a Bachelor[']", yet I think it full of the very sweetest fancies, and more exquisite language I defy a man to use; on the whole I enjoy it very much, tho' I cant help wishing all the time, that he had been *translated* like Enoch of old, after his Bachelors Reverie, and the "chariot of fire, and the horses thereof," were all that was seen of him, after that exquisite writing.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 171). Ink.

PUBLICATION: LL 82, in part.

*Dream Life*, by Ik Marvel (Donald G. Mitchell), was published in December 1851. Mrs. Bianchi said (in LL) that this letter was written after receiving a copy of the book from Austin. The location of the copy, if it survives, is not known. For an identification of Washburn, see Appendix 1. In her scripture allusion, ED combined the translation of Enoch with that of Elijah: ". . . behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, . . . and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2.11).

To Austin Dickinson

18 February 1852

Austin.

We received your letters last evening — or Father and Vinnie did, for I didn't seem to have any; Vinnie cant write today on account of those metaphysics, to which you so touchingly allude. Father also is very busy, so perhaps you wont object to an article from me.

We are all pretty well at home — Martha is getting better, and Emeline, very slowly. Mat sends her love to you and says she shall write you a letter as soon as she is strong enough to keep letters on the line — she sits up most of the day now, but is not able to confine her attention to anything but a little while at a time, and has not yet

been out. I have heard from Sue three times, since I have written you — she is well, and in usual spirits. I think it would make Mat very happy to have a letter from you should you find a leisure hour, although she did not tell me to say so — they always inquire for you at Mrs W<sup>m</sup> C[utler]'s, and Mat would have written you a long time ago had she been able to do so.

Abby Wood is quite sick this week, but I think will be better soon.

Mr Sweetser's house took fire Monday evening and was with great difficulty extinguished — the family did not lie down all night, and the escape was narrow — very. The chimney had been on fire during the day, but no danger was apprehended, and sometime the last of the evening, Mrs Sweetser in going up stairs to give Abby her medicine, thought she smelt smoke in the room. Abby had not perceived it. Mrs S. then opened a door in another direction and the smoke seemed to increase — upon opening the garret door, she saw the flames bursting out from the big timbers near the chimney. Mr Sweetser was at the store — Mrs S. with great presence of mind closed the door, sent at once for Mr. Sweetser, and the family themselves worked until it was morning, pouring water, and sawing away great pieces of timber, until the flames were subdued. The house is a good deal injured, but it is such a miracle that they were not all destroyed that they dont care much for damages. Who did you send your letters and Vinnie's music by? We heard accidentally that there was something for us at W<sup>m</sup> Kellogg's store, and there they were — we dont know whence — or by whom, tho' we have suspicions of one Oliver Watson! The vial and flannel came safely, and are just the things desired. I thank you *always* for all you do for me, and would love to send you something did I know what you would like. I was on the point one day of buying a pound of *peanuts* and sending them to you in memory of college days, but Vinnie laughed me out of it — if you will like them tho', and will let me know you shall certainly have them.

Vinnie sends her love to you, and thanks you very much for her music — it is correct. Mother wont come to Boston, probably, this spring — she wants to see you very much, and did think about going some, at the time you were so unwell, but now you are better, and will be at home so soon, she will not think it worth while.

We are all very happy to have you well and happy, and hope you may not be sick in all the rest of the time that you remain in



Boston. We have never told you that Pussy has gone—she disappeared about four weeks ago, and we can find nothing of her, so we presume she is dead. We miss her very much, and I think you will miss her, when you come home.

April dont seem quite so far off as it used to, last December—I can almost count the days now, before you are coming home, they seem so few. There are a good many lectures here now, before the Lyceum. Mr Mt Pleasant-Nash, is giving a course of Agricultural ones, twelve in all—and besides a lecture from him once or twice in a week, there is also another from some other gentlemen, on some literary subject. Prof Fowler gave one upon Adam Smith, last evening. Tutor Edwards will give the next. Emmons passed the evening here, and Vinnie and I staid at home—mother went out with Father, but thought the lecture too high for her unobtrusive faculties. I shall love to get a letter when you have the time.

Emily.

Mother wants me to add a word in relation to her coming—you will see what she thinks about in the longer sheet—besides the other reasons, there given—Father will be away at Court for three or four weeks to come, most all of the time—*this* mother thinks an objection, as should she go away too we should be quite alone, and the folks would'nt think that safe. Then she thinks you are very busy, and however happy to see her, and desirous to have her come, yet her visit would necessarily occupy much of your time, and as she will see you so soon at home, she wants me to ask you if you dont agree with her in its not being just the thing, for her to visit you now? Kate Hitchcock is to be married in March. I dont envy her that Storrs. Root, Harrington, Storrs, Emmons, Graves, and the Tutors, come in quite often to see us. Emily Fowler was here Monday afternoon—inquired particularly for you—says Charles is “doing nicely.” March is at Harvard—and writes encouragingly in reference to himself. Emily has much to make her sad—I wonder how she endures all her numberless trials. The railroad goes on swimmingly—everything is stir and commotion. The Godfreys have heard from George—he has reached the Isthmus, suffered all things, according to his account, and thinks going to California, quite a little undertaking! He has probably reached the mines before now. Much love from us all.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Wednesday morn. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson/Care of Joel Norcross./31—Milk St./Boston/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Feb 18.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 219–221.

“Mr Mt Pleasant-Nash” was the Reverend John Adams Nash, principal of Mount Pleasant Institute. Catharine Hitchcock married Henry Storrs, 9 March 1852.

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

about February 1852

Thank the dear little snow flakes, because they fall *today* rather than some vain *weekday*, when the world and the cares of the world try so hard to keep me from my departed friend—and thank you, too, dear Susie, that you never weary of me, or never *tell* me so, and that when the world is cold, and the storm sighs e'er so piteously, I am sure of one sweet shelter, *one* covert from the storm! The bells are ringing, Susie, north, and east, and south, and *your own* village bell, and the people who love God, are expecting to go to meeting; dont *you* go Susie, not to *their* meeting, but come with me this morning to the church within our hearts, where the bells are always ringing, and the preacher whose name is Love—shall intercede there for us!

They will all go but me, to the usual meetinghouse, to hear the usual sermon; the inclemency of the storm so kindly detaining me; and as I sit here Susie, alone with the winds and you, I have the old *king feeling* even more than before, for I know not even the *cracker man* will invade *this* solitude, this sweet Sabbath of our's. And thank you for my dear letter, which came on Saturday night, when all the world was still; thank you for the love it bore me, and for it's golden thoughts, and feelings so like gems, that I was sure I *gathered* them in whole baskets of pearls! I mourn this morning, Susie, that I have no sweet sunset to gild a page for *you*, nor any bay so blue—not even a little chamber way up in the sky, as your's is, to give me thoughts of heaven, which *I* would give to you. You know how I must write you, down, down, in the terrestrial; no sunset here, no stars; not even a bit of *twilight* which I may poetize—and send you! Yet Susie, there will be romance in the letter's ride to you—think of the hills and the dales,

and the rivers it will pass over, and the drivers and conductors who will hurry it on to you; and wont that make a poem such as can ne'er be written? I think of you dear Susie, *now*, I dont know how or why, but more dearly as every day goes by, and that sweet month of promise draws nearer and nearer; and I view July so differently from what I used to—once it seemed parched, and dry—and I hardly loved it *any* on account of it's heat and dust; but *now* Susie, month of all the year the best; I skip the violets—and the dew, and the early Rose and the Robins; I will exchange them *all* for that angry and hot noonday, when I can count the hours and the *minutes* before you come—Oh Susie, I often think that I will try to tell you how very dear you are, and how I'm watching for you, but the words wont come, tho' the *tears* will, and I sit down disappointed—yet darling, you know it all—then why do I seek to tell you? I do not know; in thinking of those I love, my reason is all gone from me, and I do fear sometimes that I must make a hospital for the hopelessly insane, and chain me up there such times, so I wont injure you.

*Always* when the sun shines, and always when it storms, and *always always*, Susie, we are remembering you, and what else besides *remembering*; I shall not *tell* you, because you know! Were it not for dear Mattie, I dont know what we would do, but she loves you so dearly, and is never tired of talking about you, and we all get together and talk it oer and oer, and it makes us more resigned, than to mourn for you *alone*. It was only yesterday, that I went to see dear Mattie, intending in my heart to stay a little while, only a *very* little one, because of a good many errands which I was going to do, and will you believe it, Susie, I was there an hour—and an hour, and half an hour besides, and would'nt have supposed it had been minutes so many—and what do [you] guess we talked about, all those hours long—what would you give to know—give me one little glimpse of your sweet face, dear Susie, and I will tell you all—we didn't talk of statesmen, and we didn't talk of kings—but the time was *filled full*, and when the latch was lifted and the oaken door was closed, why, Susie, I realized as never I did before, how much a *single cottage* held that was dear to me. It is sweet—and like home, at Mattie's, but it's *sad* too—and up comes little memory and paints—and paints—and paints—and the strangest thing of all, her canvass is never full, and I find her where I left her, every time that I come—and who is she painting—Ah,

Susie, "dinna choose to tell"—but it is'nt Mr Cutler, and it is'nt Daniel Boon, and I shant *tell* you any more—Susie, what will you say if I tell you that Henry Root is coming to see me, some evening of this week, and I have promised to read him some parts of all your letters; now you wont care, dear Susie, for he wants so much to hear, and I shant read him anything which I know you would not be willing—just some little places, which will please him so—I have seen him several times lately, and I admire him, Susie, because he talks of *you* so frequently and beautifully; and I know he is so true to you, when you are far away—We talk more of you, dear Susie, than of any other thing—he tells me how wonderful you are, and I tell him how true you are, and his big eyes beam, and he seems so delighted—I know you would'nt care, Susie, if you knew how much joy it made—As I told him the other evening of all your letters to me, he looked up *very* longingly, and I knew what he would say, were he enough acquainted—so I answered the question his heart wanted to ask, and when some pleasant evening, before this week is gone, you remember home and Amherst, then know, Loved One—that *they* are remembering *you*, and that "two or three" are gathered in your name, loving, and speaking of you—and will you be there in the midst of them? Then I've found a beautiful, new, friend, and I've told him about dear Susie, and promised to let him know you so soon as you shall come. Dear Susie, in all your letters there are things sweet and many about which I would speak, but the time says no—yet dont think I forget them—Oh no—they are safe in the little chest which tells no secrets—nor the moth, nor the rust can reach them—but when the time we dream of, comes, *then* Susie, I shall bring them, and we will spend long hours chatting and chatting of them—those precious thoughts of friends—how I loved them, and how I love them now—nothing but Susie *herself* is *half* so dear. Susie, I have not asked you if you were cheerful and well—and I cant think why, except that there's something *perrennial* in those we dearly love, immortal life and vigor; why it seems as if any sickness, or harm, would flee away, would not dare do them wrong, and Susie, while you are taken from me, I class you with the *angels*, and you know the Bible tells us—"there is no sickness there." But, dear Susie, *are* you well, and *peaceful*, for I wont make you cry by saying, are you *happy*? Dont see the *blot*, Susie. It's because I *broke the Sabbath!*

Susie, what shall I do — there is'nt room enough; not *half* enough, to hold what I was going to say. Wont you tell the man who makes sheets of paper, that I hav'nt the *slightest* respect for him!

And when shall I have a letter — when it's convenient, Susie, not when tired and faint — *ever*!

Emeline gets well so slowly; poor Henry; I guess he thinks true love's course does'nt run very smooth —

Much love from Mother and Vinnie, and then there are *some* others who do not dare to send —

Who loves you most, and loves you best, and thinks of you when others rest?

T'is Emilie —

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 9). Ink. Dated: Sunday morning.

PUBLICATION: FF 177-181, in part.

The beautiful new friend was probably Henry Vaughan Emmons. In a recent letter to Austin (no. 72) she spoke of having taken a ride with him alone. Henry Nash and Emeline Kellogg were married three years later (see letter no. 53).

78

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

about 1852

Dear Emily,

I cant come in this morning, because I am so cold, but you will know I am here — ringing the big front door bell, and leaving a note for you.

Oh I *want* to come in, I have a great mind *now* to follow little Jane into your warm sitting room; are you there, dear Emily?

No, I resist temptation, and run away from the door just as fast as my feet will carry me, lest if I once come in, I shall grow so happy, *happy*, that I shall stay there *always*, and never go home at *all*! You will have read this quite, by the time I reach the office, and you cant think how fast I run!

Aff

Emily.

P.S. I have just shot past the corner, and now all the wayside houses, and the little gate flies open to see me coming home!

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MANUSCRIPT: NYPL. Ink. Dated: Thursday morn. Addressed on the fold: Miss Emily E. Fowler.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 135; I.L. 136-137; L (1931) 135.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

79

To Austin Dickinson

2 March 1852

Only a word, Austin, to tell you how we are. I presume you were quite surprised to receive an anonymous bundle, which you must have done today, if Mr Graves did his duty. I did'nt mean it should go without a letter in it, of some considerable length. I wanted to write you yesterday more than I ever did in my life, and will tell you now, why I did'nt. But first, I will write how we *are*, since I promised you that, beforehand.

Father has been shut up with the rheumatism, since Saturday — is rather better today, and hopes to be out tomorrow — the rest of us are as well as could possible be expected! Our *minds* are not well, *mine* especially, has quite a number of symptoms — and I apprehend a *result*!

On the whole, however; we bear it with a good deal of fortitude.

I would have given most anything to have had you here, last evening — the scene was indeed too rich, to be detailed by my pen, and I shall ever regret that the *world* has lost such a chance to laugh. Let me add as I go along, that father's frame of mind is *as usual* the *happiest*, developing itself in constant acts of regard, and *epithets of tenderness*!

Soon after tea, last night, a violent ring at the bell — Vinnie obeys the summons — Mr Harrington, Brainerd, would like to see me at the door. I come walking in from the kitchen, frightened almost to death, and receive the command from father, "not to stand at the door" — terrified beyond measure, I advance to the outside door — Mr. H. has an errand — will not consent to come in, on account of my father's sickness — having dismissed him hastily, I retreat again to the kitchen — where I find mother and Vinnie, making most desperate efforts to control themselves, but with little success — once more breathe freely, and conclude that my lungs were given me, for only the best of purposes. Another ring at the door — enter W<sup>m</sup> [Cowper] Dickinson —

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soon followed by Mr Thurston! I again crept into the sitting room, more dead than alive, and endeavored to *make conversation*. Father looked round triumphantly. I remarked that "the weather was rather cold" today, to which they all assented—indeed I *never witnessed* such *wonderful unanimity*. Fled to my mind again, and endeavored to procure something equally agreeable with my *last happy remark*. Bethought me of Sabbath day, and the Rev. Mr Bliss, who preached upon it—remarked with wonderful emphasis, that I thought the Rev. gentleman a very remarkable preacher, and discovered a strong resemblance between himself & Whitfield, in the way of remark—I confess it *was rather* laughable, having never so much as seen the *ashes* of that gentleman—but oh such a look as I got from my rheumatic sire. You should have seen it—I never can find a language vivid eno' to portray it to you—well, pretty soon, another pull at the bell—enter *Thankful Smith*, in the furs and robes of her ancestors, while *James* brings up the rear.

Austin, my cup was full—I endeavored to shrink away into primeval nothingness—but sat there large as life, in spite of every effort. Finally Father, accompanied by the cousins, adjourned to the kitchen fire—and Vinnie and I, and our friends enjoyed the rest of the evening.

How much I have said about nothing, and yet if you were *here*, I should take so much comfort in telling you all these things, that I try to forget you are gone, and to talk as if it *were* so; and how I wish it *was*, and that brings me back again to the feet of the smiling April; oh April, April, wilt thou not soon be here?

Dear Austin, are you well, and are y'r spirits cheerful? How I do want to see you—Oh yes—*indeed* I do, and so do we all! Mother didn't send *all* the clothes because it isn't the washing week, but she tho't you might like these now, and the rest will be done next Monday, to send by the first who goes. They were delighted with the Gimp, at Mrs. Warner's. Mrs Warner says "Austin has such a *perfect* taste"—Dont tell Emily Norcross—Vinnie and I, kept dark! No more now from

Emilie

Much love from us all—take good care of yourself. Love to E Norcross—and all.

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MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Tuesday noon. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson/Care of Joel Norcross./31—Milk St. Boston/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Mar 3.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 222–223.

George Whitefield, the noted evangelist, had visited Jonathan Edwards at Northampton in 1740.

80

To Austin Dickinson

7 March 1852

I will write while they've gone to meeting, lest they stop me, when they get home. I stayed to Communion this morning, and by that way, bought the privilege of not going this afternoon, and having a talk with you, meanwhile.

It's a glorious afternoon—the sky is blue and warm—the wind blows just enough to keep the clouds sailing, and the sunshine, Oh *such* sunshine, it isn't like gold, for gold is dim beside it; it isn't like anything which you or I have seen! It seems to me "Ik Marvel" was born on such a day; I only only wish you were here. Such days were made on purpose for Susie and you and me, then what in the world are you gone for, Oh dear, I do not know, but this I *do* know, that if *wishing* would bring you home, you were here today. Is it pleasant in Boston? Of *course* it isn't, tho', I might have known more than to make such an inquiry. No doubt the streets are muddy, and the sky some dingy hue, and I can think just how every thing bangs and rattles, and goes rumbling along thro' stones and plank and clay! I dont feel as if I could have you there, possibly, another day. I'm afraid you'll turn into a bank, or a Pearl Street counting room, if you have not already, assumed some monstrous shape living in such a place.

Let me see—April—three weeks until April—the very *first* of April, well, perhaps that will do, only be sure of the week, the *whole* week, and nothing but the week; if they make new arrangements, give my respects to them, and tell them *old* arrangements are good enough for you, and you will have them, then if they raise the wind, why let it blow—there's nothing more excellent than a breeze now and then!

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What a time we shall have 'last day, after we get home from meeting — why it makes me *dance* to think of it; and Austin, if I dance so many days beforehand what will become of me when the hour really arrives? I dont know, I'm sure, and I dont care, much, for that, or for anything else, but get you home! We will call on [*half a page cut out*]

I have been hunting all over the house, since the folks went to meeting, to find a small tin box, to send her flowers in [*lines missing*] very often and [*line erased*]. Abby is getting well, is coming down stairs this week. Emiline, too is gaining — we will have them all cured before you get here. I'm so glad you are well and happy, it half reconciles me to having you away — the *smallest* half! Kate Hitchcock and Storrs, are coming off tomorrow evening. Dont know whether they will have a wedding, or not, presume the *faculty* will be present in robes. I am more and more convinced, that this is a great country! Emily Fowler was here yesterday afternoon — inquired for, and sent [*verso of half-page cut out*]

out of the house. Dont know where they are going — guess they will have to live on College Tower, for the houses are pretty full [*five lines missing*]. There's a great demand for Houses, and Father looks very grand, and carries his hands in his pockets in case he should meet a *Northampton man*. The Tyler's are going to Pawtucket this spring, to live.

Henry [Nash] has whiskers. Wells Newport has disappeared, and our horse is now under the care of Jeremiah Holden, who seems a faithful hand. There are many things to say, but meeting is out, and all the folks are coming.

Sunday evening —

Much Love from Mother and Vinnie — we are now pretty well, and our hearts are set on April, the *very first* of April!

Emilie

Love to Miss Nichols — E. Norcross, if still there, and all the relatives. Sorry he didn't see Sue.

Liked your letter very much, and hope I shall have another one pretty soon.

Vinnie went to South Hadley with Henry Root, Wednesday to call on Jane [Hitchcock].

Father has got well. John Emerson's going [to give a] lecture, Tues[day].

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MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday afternoon. Envelope addressed by Edward Dickinson: Mr. Austin Dickinson/Boston. The mutilations of this letter, like those in other letters written to Austin, were probably made at some later date to expunge references to Sue.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 78-79, in part; *L* (1931) 75-76, in part; *Home* 226-232, entire, with facsimile reproduction.

The New England Puritans established a Fast Day in March or April, celebrated by proclamation of the magistrates of each province or colony; the custom survived as a holiday in Massachusetts well into the nineteenth century. In 1852 it fell on April 8.

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To Jane Humphrey

23 March 1852

Thank you for the Catalogue, dear Jennie — why did you run away from N. England and Vinnie and me?

Jennie didn't answer the letter I sent her a long ago, but I am not angry with her. The snows have covered Abby in her sweet churchyard rest. I was going to pick a leaf from the tree nearest her grave and send it in here, Jennie, but I thought I might disturb her — and besides the leaves are faded and would only make you cry. Your sister Helen will be very near us Jennie. I shall hope to see her sweet face when I go to Northampton with father.

Now Jennie, dont forget me and I will remember you and some sweet summer's day in the future I shall meet you — if not on earth, Jennie, I *will* somewhere else — you know where!

The folks at the West must be kind to you — tell them to be for *my* sake — they *will* not refuse me.

I send you a taste Jennie, of E. Kellogg's wedding cake — you remember her, dont you? Eat it tearfully, Jennie, for it came all the way from me!

Your aff

Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: Rosenbach 1170/17 (3). Ink. Envelope, partly torn away, addressed: Miss Jane T. H.../Wi.../La... Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Mar 24. Unpublished.

Jane Humphrey was teaching at Willoughby, Ohio. Abby Haskell died 19 April 1851. Eliza Kellogg married Hanson Read, 25 November 1851.

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To Austin Dickinson

24 March 1852

You would'nt think it was spring, Austin, if you were at home this morning, for we had a great snow storm yesterday, and things are all white, this morning. It sounds funny enough to hear birds singing, and sleighbells, at a time. But it won't last any, so you need'nt think 'twill be winter at the time when you come home.

I waited a day or two, thinking I might hear from you, but you will be looking for me, and wondering where I am, so I shant wait any longer. We're rejoiced that you're coming home—the first thing we said to father, when he got out of the stage, was to ask if you were coming. I was sure you would all the while, for father said “of course you would,” he should “consent to no other arrangement,” and as you say, Austin, what father says, “he means.” How very soon it will be now—why when I really think of it, how near, and how happy it is, my heart grows light so fast, that I could mount a grasshopper, and gallop around the *world*, and not fatigue him any! The sugar weather holds on, and I do believe it will stay until you come.

Mat came home from meeting with us last Sunday, was here Saturday afternoon when father came, and at her special request, was secreted by me in the *entry*, until he was fairly in the house, when she escaped, *unharméd*.

She inquired all about you, and is delighted enough, that you are coming home. I think Mat's got the notion that you dont care much for home or old friends, but have found their better substitutes in Boston, tho' I do my very best to undelude her. But you will be here soon, and you, of all others, know best how to convince her. I had a letter from Sue last week, at Washington—am expecting another to-day. Dwight Gilbert wrote Mat, that “the Pres' gave a Levee, as soon as he heard of their arrival.” The “M C” remind Sue vividly of little boys at school, squabbling, and quarrelling—a very apt illustration! We had a visit from Uncle Bullard, while father was gone—he appeared Friday night, at teatime, and left us Saturday morning, had a very pleasant time. Abby Wood has got well. Emiline is able to ride out, which she did last week, with Henry, to his infinite exultation. Mat is well as ever; Jane Greely is sick with the quinzey—quite sick. Jane Gridley's husband is sick. “Mrs Skeeter” is very feeble, “cant bear

Allopathic treatment, cant have Homeopathic”—dont want Hydro-pathic—Oh what a pickle she is in—should'nt think she would deign to *live*—it is so decidedly vulgar! They have not yet concluded where to move—Mrs W. will perhaps obtain board in the “celestial city,” but I'm sure I cant imagine what will become of the rest. Here comes Mattie!

She has just gone away, after staying with me two hours. We have had a beautiful time—Mat anticipates so much in seeing you. Do make the days fly, wont you? Here's her love!

Most everybody is going to move. Jane Gridley has bought the old Simeon S[t]rong place—and is going to move there soon. Frank Pierce, the Montague place, up north—Foster Cook, Mr. Harrington's house—Mr Harrington will move into the Colburn place, until his new house is done &c. This is practical enough. I never tho't I should come to it! Keep well, and happy, Austin—13—days, and you shall come!

Much love from us all.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Wednesday morn. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson/Care of Joel Norcross./31—Milk St./Boston/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Mar 24.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 106–107, in part; *L* (1931) 102–103, in part; *Home* 232–233, entire.

Jane L. Gridley (b. 1829), daughter of Dr. Timothy Gridley, married Dr. George S. Woodman, 17 September 1849.

To Austin Dickinson

30 March 1852

Austin—have you plenty of time before you come home, to try and match this bit of calico, and get me 10. yards of it? It is but a 12½ ct. calico, but very pretty indeed, and as Vinnie has one, I think I would like to have one.

You used to like her's, I remember. Dont look, unless you have time—and dont get anything unless you can find this same. Everybody



sends their love, and we're all longing to see you. Mary Warner sends her love—I saw her yesterday.

Never mind the calico, Austin, should it give you any trouble.

Affy.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./ Care of Joel Norcross./31—Milk St./Boston/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Mar 30.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 235–236.

This note, addressed by ED, was added at the end of a letter from Lavinia.

84

To Austin Dickinson

31 March 1852

Dear Austin

You speak of not coming home, and I cant help writing one word, tho' I have but a moment of time.

I am so surprised and astonished, at the bare supposition that you are not coming, that I hardly know what to say. I am sure you are not in earnest, you cannot mean what you say. If I supposed you did, I should rather speak, than write, and rather cry, than either. We have tho't of nothing else and talked of nothing else, all winter and spring, and now the time is so near, I dont believe you will disappoint us. The winter was long and lonely, and without Susie and you, *spring* is so, but whenever the time seemed long, I looked away to April, and was sure of happiness then. I dont wonder you cant think how we look—I know just exactly how you look.

Do you wear a Kossuth Hat? I somehow tho't you did. Austin, you know mother is not in the habit of writing—she talks a great deal about you, and so does Vinnie. Are you willing to get the bottle filled again with my medicine?

We all send you our love, and shall not hear a word to your not coming in April.

Affy

Emily.

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Mr Ford was in town yesterday. He called here with Emily & inquired much for you.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Wednesday. Enclosed in a letter written by Lavinia. An attempt has been made to erase the words "Susie and" in the second paragraph.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 236.

Louis Kossuth visited the United States in the winter and spring of 1852, and was received with great enthusiasm. His pictures show him wearing a hat with a flat-topped crown, wide brim, with a plume attached to one side. The sales of the American copies were enormous.

Gordon Ford and Emily Fowler were married late in 1853. Austin came home on April 7 and stayed five days.

85

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

5 April 1852

Will you be kind to me, Susie? I am naughty and cross, this morning, and nobody loves me here; nor would *you* love me, if you should see me frown, and hear how loud the door bangs whenever I go through; and yet it is'nt anger—I dont believe it is, for when nobody sees, I brush away big tears with the corner of my apron, and then go working on—bitter tears, Susie—so hot that they burn my cheeks, and almost scorch my eyeballs, but *you* have wept much, and you know they are less of anger than *sorrow*.

And I do love to run fast—and hide away from them all; here in dear Susie's bosom, I know is love and rest, and I never would go away, did not the big world call me, and beat me for not working.

Little *Emerald Mack* is washing, I can hear the warm suds, splash. I just gave her my pocket handkerchief—so I cannot cry any more. And Vinnie sweeps—sweeps, upon the chamber stairs; and Mother is hurrying round with her hair in a silk pocket handkerchief, on account of dust. Oh Susie, it is dismal, sad and drear eno'—and the sun dont shine, and the clouds look cold and gray, and the wind dont blow, but it *pipes* the shrillest roundelay, and the birds dont sing, but twitter—and there's nobody to smile! Do I paint it *natural*—Susie, so you think how it looks? Yet dont you care—for it wont last so always, and we

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love you just as well — and think of you, as dearly, as if it were not so. Your precious letter, Susie, it sits here now, and smiles so kindly at me, and gives me such sweet thoughts of the dear writer. When you come home, darling, I shant have your letters, shall I, but I shall have *yourself*, which is more — Oh more, and better, than I can even think! I sit here with my little whip, cracking the time away, till not an hour is left of it — then you are here! And Joy is here — joy now and forevermore!

'Tis only a few days, Susie, it will soon go away, yet I say, go now, this very moment, for I need her — I must have her, Oh give her to me!

Mattie is dear and true, I love her very dearly — and Emily Fowler, too, is very dear to me — and Tempe — and Abby, and Eme', I am sure — I love them all — and I hope they love me, but, Susie, there's a great corner still; I fill it with that is gone, I hover round and round it, and call it darling names, and bid it speak to me, and ask it if it's Susie, and it answers, Nay, Ladie, Susie is stolen away!

Do I repine, is it all murmuring, or am I sad and lone, and cannot, cannot help it? Sometimes when I do feel so, I think it may be wrong, and that God will punish me by taking you away; for he is very kind to let me write to you, and to give me your sweet letters, but my heart wants *more*.

Have you ever thought of it Susie, and yet I know you have, how much these hearts claim; why I dont believe in the whole, wide world, are such hard little creditors — such real little *misers*, as you and I carry with us, in our bosoms every day. I cant help thinking sometimes, when I hear about the ungenerous, Heart, keep very still — or someone will find you out!

I am going out on the doorstep, to get you some new — green grass — I shall pick it down in the corner, where you and I used to sit, and have long fancies. And perhaps the dear little grasses were growing all the while — and perhaps they heard what we said, but they cant *tell*! I have come in now, dear Susie, and here is what I found — not quite so glad and green as when we used to sit there, but a sad and pensive grassie — mourning o'er hopes. No doubt some spruce, young *Plantain leaf* won its young heart away, and then proved false — and dont you wish *none* proved so, but little *Plantains*?

I do think it's wonderful, Susie, that our hearts dont break, *every* day, when I think of all the whiskers, and all the gallant men, but I

guess I'm made with nothing but a hard heart of stone, for it dont break any, and dear Susie, if mine is stony, your's is stone, upon stone, for you never yield *any*, where I seem quite beflown. Are we going to *ossify* always, say, Susie — how will it be? When I see the Popes and the Pollocks, and the John-Milton Browns, I think we are *liable*, but I dont know! I am glad there's a big *future* waiting for me and you. You would love to know what I read — I hardly know what to tell you, my catalogue is so small.

I have just read three little books, not great, not thrilling — but sweet and true. "The Light in the Valley," "Only," and A "House upon a Rock" — I know you would love them all — yet they dont *bewitch* me any. There are no walks in the wood — no low and earnest voices, no moonlight, nor stolen love, but pure little lives, loving God, and their parents, and obeying the laws of the land; yet read, if you meet them, Susie, for they will do one good.

I have the promise of "Alton Lock" — a certain book, called "Olive," and the "Head of a Family," which was what Mattie named to you. Vinnie and I had "Bleak House" sent to us the other day — it is like him who wrote it — that is all I can say. Dear Susie, you were so happy when you wrote to me last — I am so glad, and you will be happy *now*, for *all* my sadness, *wont* you? I cant forgive me ever, if I have made you sad, or dimmed your eye for me. I write from the Land of Violets, and from the Land of Spring, and it would ill become me to carry you nought but sorrows. I remember you, Susie, *always* — I keep you ever here, and when *you* are gone, then I'm gone — and we're 'neath one willow tree. I can only thank "the Father" for giving me such as you, I can only pray unceasingly, that he will bless my Loved One, and bring her back to me, to "go no more out forever." "Herein is Love." But *that* was Heaven — *this* is but *Earth*, yet Earth so *like* to heaven, that I would hesitate, should the true one call away.

Dear Susie — adieu!

Emilie —

Father's sister is dead, and Mother wears black on her bonnet, and has a collar of crape. A great deal of love from Vinnie, and she wants that *little note*. Austin comes home on Wednesday, but he'll only stay two days, so I fancy we shant go sugaring, as "we did last year." *Last year is gone*, Susie, did you ever think of *that*? Joseph [Lyman] is out south somewhere, a very great way off, yet we hear from him —

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 13). Ink. Dated: Monday morning.

PUBLICATION: FF 197-200, in part.

"Emerald" was used to distinguish Mrs. Mack, the Irish washerwoman, from members of the family of Deacon David Mack. In "the Popes and the Pollocks and the John-Milton Browns" ED is characterizing the young men of her acquaintance. The works of Alexander Pope were studied in schools as models of English verse; Robert Pollock, a Scottish poet, wrote *The Course of Time* (1827), which had great contemporary reputation. Perhaps she intends the ambiguity of "John-Milton Brown." Of the several John Browns known at the time, the best known was the Scottish divine (1784-1858), who wrote voluminously on religious subjects.

The books mentioned are as follows: *The Light in the Valley*, a memorial of Mary Elizabeth Stirling, who died at Haddonfield, New Jersey, 30 January 1852 (Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society, 1852); *Only*, by Matilda Anne Mackarness (Boston & Cambridge, J. Monroe, 1850); *idem*, *A House upon a Rock* (1852); *Alton Locke*, by Charles Kingsley (1850); *Olive*, by Dinah Maria Craik (Miss Mulock) (1850); *idem*, *Head of a Family* (1851). Dickens' *Bleak House* was published in monthly parts in 1852-1853.

Edward Dickinson's sister Mary (Mrs. Mark Newman) died 30 March 1852.

To Jane Humphrey

about April 1852

And what will dear Jennie say, if I tell her that selfsame minister preached about her again *today*, text and sermon, and all; morning and afternoon: why, the minister must be mad, or else *my* head is turned, I am sure I dont know which—a little of both, may be! Yet it isn't Sunday *only*, it's all the days in the week, the *whole seven* of them, that I miss Jennie and remember the long, sweet days when she was with me here. I think I love you *more* when spring comes—you know we used to sit in the front door, afternoons after school, and the shy little birds would say chirrup, chirrup, in the tall cherry trees, and if our dresses rustled, hop frightened away; and there used to be some farmer cutting down a tree in the woods, and you and I, sitting there, could hear his sharp ax ring. You wont forget it, Jennie, Oh no, I'm sure you wont, for when you are old and gray, it will be a sweet thing

to think of, through the long winter's day! And I *know* I'll remember it, for it's so precious to me that I doubt if I *could* forget it, even if I should try.

Thank you for the letter, Jennie; it was very sweet and cheering to hear your voice once more, and it was *sad too*, for I was quite sure then, that you were indeed in Willoughby, in the far state Ohio. I had heard of it all before, but not from *you*, and I didn't want to believe it, so I made up my mind straightway, that it was'n't at all true—but Jennie, I dont doubt *you*, for you never deceived me. Why so *far*, Jennie, was'n't there room enough for that young ambition, among New England hills, that it must spread it's wings, and fly away, and away, till it paused at Ohio? *Sometimes* think my dear Jennie was a *wee bit uneasy* in her own home and country, or she never had strolled so far, but wont reproach her any, for it's sad to be a stranger, and she *is* now. Why, I cant think what would tempt me to bid my friends Good bye. I'm afraid I'm growing *selfish* in my dear home, but I do love it so, and when some pleasant friend invites me to pass a week with her, I look at my father and mother and Vinnie, and all my friends, and I say no—no, cant leave them, what if they die when I'm gone; Kind Friend—"I pray thee have me excused!" Your home is broken, Jennie; my home is whole; that makes a sad, sad difference, and when I think of it more, it dont seem strange to me, as it did at first, that you could leave it.

If God should choose, Jennie, he could take *my* father, too, and my dear Vinnie, and put them in his sky, to live with him forever, but I shall pray to him every day of my life, not to take them.

It does'nt seem one bit as if *my* friends would die, for I do love them so, that even should death come after them, it dont seem as if they'd go; yet there is Abbie, and Mr. Humphrey, and many and many a dear one, whom I loved just as dearly, and *they* are not upon Earth, this lovely Sabbath evening. Bye and bye we'll be all gone, Jennie, *does it seem* as if we would? The other day I tried to think how I should look with my eyes shut, and a little white gown on, and a snow-drop on my breast; and I fancied I heard the neighbors stealing in so softly to look down in my face—so fast asleep—so still—Oh Jennie, will you and I really become like this? Dont mind what I say, Darling, I'm a naughty, bad girl to say sad things, and make you cry, but I think of the grave very often, and how much it has got of mine, and whether



I can ever stop it from carrying off what I love; that makes me sometimes speak of it when I dont intend.

Since I wrote you last, it is spring — the snow has almost gone, and the big, brown Earth is busy, arraying herself in green — first she puts on pantalettes, then little petticoats, then a frock of all colors, and such sweet little stockings and shoes — no, they are not shoes, they are least little bits of gaiters, laced up with blossoms and grass. Then her *hair*, Jennie, perfectly *crowned* with flowers — Oh she'll be a comely maid, by May Day, and she shall be *queen*, if she can! I do wish I could tell you just how the Robins sing — they dont sing now, because it is past their bedtime, and they're all fast asleep, but they *did* sing, this morning, for when we were going to church, they filled the air with such melody, and sang so deliciously, that I tho't really, Jennie, I never should get to meeting. I did want to fly away, and be a Robin too! Spring may be earlier, with you, but *she* cant be any sweeter, I know, and it wont make you angry if I say little birds there, cant sing *half so well*, for I dont believe they can! It is'nt *quite* a year since we laid Abbie to rest, sweet child, she gathers flowers in the *immortal* spring, and they dont fade, tho' she picks them all morning, and holds in her hand till noon; would'nt you and I love such violets, and Roses that never fade — Ah Jennie!

My paper *will* go away, my minutes will go with it, naughty paper — and naughty time — what shall I do *unto* you, how shall I punish you? You shall work for me again, when Jennie has answered my letter, and you wont like that, I *know*! The sooner you write me, therefore, the sooner I'll punish *them*, and you know they ought to be whipped — just as truly as I do!

Seems to me I could write all night, Jennie, and then not say the half, nor the *half of the half* of all I have to tell you, but its well I may not do so — since it would weary you. Jennie, be well, and be happy, and sometimes think of me, and how dearly I loved you, and love you still!

Aff —  
Emilie —

MANUSCRIPT: Rosenbach 1170/17 (4). Ink. Dated: Sunday Evening. Unpublished, except for sentences 3–6 in the first paragraph which were published in Whicher, *This Was a Poet* (1938), 44.

This letter follows the letter written in March (no. 81) and replies to an answer to it recently received. The opening echoes that moment in *David Copperfield* when David sits in church and imagines the preacher talking about Dora (chapter 26). Jane's father had been dead for two years. The "Mr Humphrey" here mentioned is Leonard Humphrey.

To Austin Dickinson

21 April 1852

Austin —

I wanted to write you Sunday — I was much disappointed not to, but we have had a long, and unexpected visit from some cousins in Syracuse, and I've had so much to do that I could not write before, but I have thought of you very often during this dismal storm — and hoped you were well, and not unhappy. It storms furiously now — and the rain and hail take turns beating the windows. The sun has'nt shone since Saturday, all that time the wind's blown almost a constant gale, and it has been drear enough. Vinnie said to me this morning, that "things had'nt seemed natural since Austin went away" — and I dont think they have, but I hope you are happy, and dont miss us much now. I dont think I should mind the weather if Susie, and you were here, but I feel so very lonely now, when it storms — and the wind blows. I will tell you about the cousins. You have heard father speak of his cousin, Pliny Dickinson, of Syracuse. He has had two daughters in Hanover, at Mrs Austin Dickinson's school — there is a vacation there, and he has been on to Hanover for the girls. Cousin Harriet heard he was coming, and she and Zebina wrote — urging him and his daughters to visit them. They arrived on Saturday noon, passed that night at Cousin Harriet's, and then proposed coming here. Of course, we told them they might — and having got our permission, they came home with us from meeting — and stayed until yesterday noon, when they went back to Cousin Harriet's.

Cousin Pliny says he "might stay around a month, visiting old acquaintances — if it was'nt for his business."

Fortunate for us indeed, that his business feels the need for him, or I think he would *never* go. He is a kind of compound of Deacon Haskell, Calvin Merrill, and Morton Dickinson, so you will easily

guess how much we enjoy his society. The girls are pretty girls, very simple hearted and happy — and would be very interesting, if they had any body to teach them. The oldest, Lizzie, is nineteen — looks exactly Sarah Pyncheon, and is very lively and bright, Sarah, the younger — fifteen, a sober little body — and has quite a pensive air, and a cough.

They will stay until May sometime, in Hatfield with their Grand-mother — and then go back to Hanover.

Mattie is very well, was with us yesterday morning — inquired particularly for you, and sent her love to you. I have not heard from Sue, since you went away, but think I shall today. Mrs Bishop Tyler spent the day with us, last Friday — we enjoyed it very much. She has now gone to Pawtucket, and Lizzie is going today. Mary Lyman came Saturday — and I shall go and see her just as soon as it clears off, for it's stormed ever since she came. She has been in Hanover — at the same school with these cousins — attending to French and music, and they have told us how much she said about you. Lizzie says "Miss Lyman thinks there never *was* such a fellow," and the girls admire her so much, that they think you must be most perfect — so to have won her regard.

The Fowler House is shut up, and E — and Willie are at Mrs Ferry's; I believe the Professor has gone.

I send you a schedule of yesterday — the Exhibition is said to have been a very fine one, tho' Mat and I *did*'nt go! We are thinking a great deal about May, and your coming home to see us. I hope we shall live and be well. I shall not allow *Mrs Aiken* to visit home at that time. I think she and David, can come some other time. I enclose my prescription, Austin, and if you can have the vial filled, and send it by Mr Watson, I should be very glad to have you, tho' dont, unless it's convenient. W<sup>m</sup> Dickinson will take the valise — it is not certain whether he will go tomorrow, or Friday. We think a great deal about you, and all send you much love. You must write when you get the time.

Your very aff

Emilie —

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 23). Ink. Dated: Wednesday morn.

PUBLICATION: LL 34, three sentences only.

Cousins Harriet and Zebina Montague were sister and brother, he an invalid. Professor Fowler sailed for Europe, April 29. Pliny Dickinson,

from Syracuse, and his daughters, left Amherst on April 21 (*Lavinia's* diary — HCL). *Mrs. Aiken*, who has not been identified, is referred to again in letter no. 113.

To Susan Gilbert (*Dickinson*)

late April 1852

So sweet and still, and Thee, Oh Susie, what need I more, to make my heaven whole?

Sweet Hour, blessed Hour, to carry me to you, and to bring you back to me, long enough to snatch one kiss, and whisper Good bye, again.

I have thought of it all day, Susie, and I fear of but little else, and when I was gone to meeting it filled my mind so full, I could not find a *chink* to put the worthy pastor; when he said "Our Heavenly Father," I said "Oh Darling Sue"; when he read the 100<sup>th</sup> Psalm, I kept saying your precious letter all over to myself, and Susie, when they sang — it would have made you laugh to hear one little voice, piping to the departed. I made up words and kept singing how I loved you, and you had gone, while all the rest of the choir were singing Hallelujahs. I presume nobody heard me, because I sang *so small*, but it was a kind of a comfort to think I might put them out, singing of you. I a'nt there this afternoon, tho', because I am here, writing a little letter to my dear Sue, and I am very happy. I think of ten weeks — Dear One, and I think of love, and you, and my heart grows full and warm, and my breath stands still. The sun doesn't shine at all, but I can feel a sunshine stealing into my soul and making it all summer, and every thorn, a *rose*. And I pray that such summer's sun shine on my Absent One, and cause her bird to sing!

You have been happy, Susie, and now are sad — and the whole world seems lone; but it wont be so always, "some days *must* be dark and dreary"! You wont cry any more, will you, Susie, for my father will be your father, and my home will be your home, and where you go, I will go, and we will lie side by side in the kirkyard.

I have parents on earth, dear Susie, but your's are in the skies, and I have an earthly fireside, but you have one above, and you have

a "Father in Heaven," where I have *none*—and *sister* in heaven, and I know they love you dearly, and think of you every day.

Oh I wish I had half so many dear friends as you in heaven—I could'nt spare them now—but to know they had got there safely, and should suffer nevermore—Dear Susie!

I know I was very naughty to write such fretful things, and I know I could have helped it, if I had tried hard enough, but I thought my heart would break, and I knew of nobody here that cared anything about it—so I said to myself, "We will tell Susie about it." You dont know what a comfort it was, and you wont know, till the big cup of bitterness is filled brimfull, and they say, "Susie, drink it!" Then Darling, let me be there, and let me drink the half, and you will feel it all!

I am glad you have rested, Susie. I wish the week had been *more*, a whole *score* of days and joys for you, yet again, had it lasted longer, then had you not come so soon and I had been lonelier, it is right as it is! Ten weeks, they will seem short to you—for care will fill them, but to Mattie and me, long. We shall grow tired, waiting, and our eyes will ache with looking for you, and with now and then a tear. And yet we have *hope* left, and we shall keep her busy, cheering away the time. Only think Susie, it is vacation now—there shall be no more vacation until ten weeks have gone, and no more snow; and how very little while it will be now, before you and I are sitting out on the broad stone step, mingling our lives together! I cant talk of it now tho', for it makes me long and yearn so, that I cannot sleep tonight, for thinking of it, and you.

Yes, we did go sugaring, and remembered who was gone—and who was there last year, and love and recollection brought with them Little Regret, and set her in the midst of us.

Dear Susie, Dear Joseph; why take the best and dearest, and leave our hearts behind? While the Lovers sighed; and twined oak leaves, and the *anti* enamored ate sugar, and crackers, in the house, I went to see what I could find. Only think of it, Susie; I had'nt any appetite, nor any Lover, either, so I made the best of fate, and gathered antique stones, and your little flowers of moss opened their lips and spoke to me, so I was not alone, and bye and bye Mattie and me might have been seen sitting together upon a high—gray rock, and we might have been heard talking, were anyone very near! And did thoughts

of that dear Susie go with us on the rock, and sit there 'tween us twain? Loved One, thou knowest!

I gathered something for you, because you were not there, an acorn, and some moss blossoms, and a little shell of a snail, so whitened by the snow you would think 'twas a cunning artist had carved it from alabaster—then I tied them all up in a leaf with some last summer's grass I found by a brookside, and I'm keeping them all for you.

I saw Mattie at church today, tho' could not speak to her. Friday evening I saw her, and talked with her besides. Oh I do love her—and when you come if we all live till then, it will be *precious*, Susie. You speak to me of sorrow, of what you have "lost and loved," say rather, of what you have loved and *won*, for it is *much*, dear Susie; I can count the big, true hearts by *clusters*, full of bloom, and bloom amaranthine, because *eternal*!

Emilie—

I have heard all about the journal. Oh Susie, that you should come to this! I want you to get it bound—at my expense—Susie—so when he takes you from me, to live in his new home, I may have *some* of you. I am sincere.

Mother sends her best love to you. It makes her look so happy when I give your's to her. Send it always, Susie, and send your respects to father! And much from Vinnie. She was so happy at her note. After she finished reading it, she said, "I dont know but it's wrong, but I love Sue better—than Jane, and I love her and Mattie better than all the friends I ever had in my life." Vinnie hopes to be like you, and to do as you do.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 18). Ink. Dated: Sunday afternoon.

PUBLICATION: LL 20, three sentences in part; FF 213–215, in part.

Sue had been spending her spring holiday of ten days at Havre de Grace, Maryland, with her friend Harriet Hinsdale, at the home of the latter's sister, Mrs. Armon Davis. Joseph Lyman was the young man whose name Emily couples with Sue's as another distant friend. At the end of the fifth from the last paragraph ED wrote, upside down: *Hattie!* On the quotation from Longfellow's "The Rainy Day" in the fourth paragraph, see the note to letter no. 36.



To Austin Dickinson

10 May 1852

Dear Austin.

I have made the fires, and got breakfast, and the folks wont get up, and I dont care for it because I can write to you. I did not write yesterday, because mother was sick, and I thought it would trouble you. She was attacked Friday, with a difficulty in her face, similar to the one which you have, and with which you suffer so much once or twice in a year. She had her face lanced yesterday, and was much more comfortable last evening, so I think she'll get well right away.

Vinnie and I have had to work pretty hard on account of her sickness, so I'm afraid we shant write you anything very refreshing this time. Vinnie will tell you all the news, so I will take a little place to describe a thunder shower which occurred yesterday afternoon—the very first of the season. Father and Vinnie were at meeting, mother asleep in her room, and I at work by my window on a "Lyceum Lecture." The air was really scorching, the sun red and hot, and you know just how the birds sing before a thunder storm, a sort of hurried, and agitated song—pretty soon it began to thunder, and the great "cream colored heads" peeped out of their windows—then came the wind and rain and I hurried around the house to shut all the doors and windows. I wish you had seen it come, so cool and so refreshing—and everything glistening from it as with a golden dew—I tho't of you all the time, and I thought too, of Susie; I did wish you both here through all that blessed shower.

This morning is fair and delightful—you will awake in dust, and amidst the ceaseless din of the untiring city, would'nt you change your dwelling for my palace in the dew? I hear them coming, Austin. Goodbye for now. I shall see you so soon.

E.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Monday morning, 5.0c. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson./Care of Joel Norcross/31—Milk St./Boston./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. May 10.

PUBLISHED: *L* (1894) 107, in part; *L* (1931) 103–104, in part; *Home* 238, entire.

To Austin Dickinson

13 May 1852

Dear Austin.

I have wanted to write you a long letter all the week, but you know Mother has been sick, and I have had more to do; but I've tho't of you all the time, and thought too how happy we should be if you were living at home.

It is very hard to have it so, but I try to be as happy and as cheerful as I can to keep father and mother from feeling so very lonely as they must all the while.

Mattie was with me most all the afternoon—we had a long, sad talk about Sue and Michigan, and Life, and our own future, and Mattie cried and I cried, and we had a solemn time, and Mat said she had a beautiful letter from you last night. She was going to send you some flowers in a box, the other day, but you had'nt then answered her letter, and Mat is very shy, so you see why you did'nt get them. John Thompson brought us the books—he arrived Monday—no, it was Tuesday evening—I have read "Ellen Middleton" and now Mat has it.

I need'nt tell you I like it, nor need I tell you more, for you know

I thank you more and more for all the pleasures you give me—I can give you nothing Austin, but a warm and grateful heart, that is your's now and always. Love from all, and Mat.

Emilie

Only think, you are coming Saturday! I dont know why it is that it's always *Sunday* immediately you get home—I will arrange it differently. If it was'nt 12 o'clock I would stay longer.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Thursday night. Addressed on the fold: Austin. An attempts has been made at some time to erase the words "Sue and" in the third paragraph.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 79–80, in part; *L* (1931) 77, in part; *Home* 243, entire.

A draft of a letter from Austin to Martha Gilbert, dated 11 May 1852, is in *Home* 240–242. Lady Georgiana Fullerton's novel *Ellen Middleton*, which attracted W. E. Gladstone's attention when it first appeared in the *English Review*, was published in an American edition in 1849.

To Abiah Root

about May 1852

I love to link you, A. and E., I love to put you together and look at you side by side—the picture pleases me, and I should love to watch it until the sun goes down, did I not call to mind a very precious letter for which I have not as yet rendered a single farthing, so let me thank you that midst your many friends and cares and influencias, you yet found time for me, and loved me. You remarked that I had written you more affectionately than wont—I have thought that word over and over, and it puzzles me now; whether our few last years have been cooler than our first ones, or whether I write indifferently when I truly know it not, the query troubles me. I do believe sincerely, that the friendship formed at school was no warmer than now, nay more, that *this* is warmest—they differ indeed to me as morning differs from noon—one may be fresher, cheerier, but the other fails not.

You and I have grown older since school-days, and our years have made us soberer—I mean have made *me* so, for you were always dignified, e'en when a little girl, and I used, now and then, to cut a timid caper. That makes me think of you the very first time I saw you, and I can't repress a smile, not to say a hearty laugh, at your little girl expense. I have roused your curiosity, so I will e'en tell you that one Wednesday afternoon, in the days of that dear old Academy, I went in to be entertained by the rhetoric of the gentlemen and the milder form of the girls—I had hardly recovered myself from the dismay attendant upon entering august assemblies, when with the utmost equanimity you ascended the stairs, bedecked with dandelions, arranged, it seemed, for curls. I shall never forget that scene, if I live to have gray hairs, nor the very remarkable fancies it gave me then of you, and it comes over me now with the strangest bygone funniness, and I laugh merrily. Oh, Abiah, you and the early flower are forever linked to me; as soon as the first green grass comes, up from a chink in the stones peeps the little flower, precious "leontodon," and my heart fills toward you with a warm and childlike fullness! Nor do I laugh now; far from it, I rather bless the flower which sweetly, slyly too, makes me come nearer you.

But, my dear, I can't give the dandelion the privilege due to you, so good by, little one!

I would love to see you, Abiah, I would rather than write to you, might I with equal ease, for the weather is very warm, and my head aches a little, and my heart a little more, so taking me *collectively*, I seem quite miserable, but I'll give you the sunny corners, and you mustn't look at the shade. You were happy when you wrote me; I hope so now, though I would you were in the country, and could reach the hills and fields. I can reach them, carry them home, which I do in my arms daily, and when they drop and fade, I have only to gather fresh ones. Your joy would indeed be full, could you sit as I, at my window, and hear the boundless birds, and every little while feel the breath of some new flower! Oh, do you love the spring, and isn't it brothers and sisters, and blessed, ministering spirits unto you and me, and us all?

I often see Abby—oftener than at sometimes when friendship drooped a little. Did you ever know that a flower, once withered and freshened again, became an immortal flower,—that is, that it rises again? I think resurrections here are sweeter, it may be, than the longer and lasting one—for you expect the one, and only hope for the other. . . . I will show you the *sunset* if you will sit by me, but I cannot bring it there, for so much gold is heavy. Can you see it in Philadelphia?

Abby's health does not change—I fear the wide world holds but little strength for her—I would it were otherwise. Abby is sweet and patient, does n't it ever seem as if her lovely patience was shriving her for God? We cannot tell, but I trust that her sweet face may not be hidden yet. Dear Abiah, do write me whenever you love to do, yet *oftener* I am not confident I ever would hear at all, should I conclude the bargain.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. See note 3 in "Notes on the Present Text." All of the letter, except the concluding paragraph, has been published.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 60-63; L (1931) 52-54, dated (presumably by ED): Sabbath Day.

Abiah remained in Philadelphia until June (see letter no. 69).

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

about May 1852

Precious Sue—Precious Mattie!

All I desire in *this* life—all I pray for, or hope for in that long life to come!

Dear Mattie just left me, and I stand just where we stood smiling and chatting together a moment ago. Our last words were of you, and as we said Dear Susie, the sunshine grew so warm, and out peeped prisoned leaves, and the Robins answered Susie, and the big hills left their work, and echoed Susie, and from the smiling fields, and from the fragrant meadows came troops of *fairy* Susies, and asked "Is it me"? No, Little One, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can the heart conceive" my Susie, whom I love.

These days of heaven bring you nearer and nearer, and every bird that sings, and every bud that blooms, does but remind me more of that garden *unseen*, awaiting the hand that tills it. Dear Susie, when you come, how many boundless blossoms among those silent beds! How I do count the days—how I do long for the time when I may count the *hours* without incurring the charge of *Femina insania*! I made up the Latin—Susie, for I could't think how it went, according to Stoddard and Andrew!

I want to send you *joy*, I have half a mind to put up one of these dear little Robin's, and send him singing to you. I know I would, Susie, did I think he would live to get there and sing his little songs.

I shall keep everything singing tho', until Dear Child gets home—and I shant let anything *blossom* till then—either.

I have got to go out in the garden now, and whip a Crown-Imperial for presuming to hold it's head up, until you have come home, so farewell, Susie—I shall think of you at sunset, and at sunrise, again; and at noon, and forenoon, and afternoon, and always, and evermore, till this heart stops beating and is still.

Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 173). Ink. Dated: Wednesday.

PUBLICATION: LL 27, in small part, somewhat altered.

Solomon Stoddard and Ethan Allen Andrews compiled *A Grammar of the Latin Language for Schools and Colleges* (Boston, 1837). ED's quota-

tion paraphrases 1 Corinthians 2.9: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

early June 1852

They are cleaning house today, Susie, and I've made a flying retreat to my own little chamber, where with affection, and you, I will spend this my precious hour, most precious of all the hours which dot my flying days, and the one so dear, that for it I barter everything, and as soon as it is gone, I am sighing for it again.

I cannot believe, dear Susie, that I have stayed without you almost a whole year long; sometimes the time seems short, and the thought of you as warm as if you had gone but yesterday, and again if years and years had trod their silent pathway, the time would seem less long. And now how soon I shall have you, shall hold you in my arms; you will forgive the tears, Susie, they are so glad to come that it is not in my heart to reprove them and send them home. I don't know why it is—but there's something in your name, now you are taken from me, which fills my heart so full, and my eye, too. It is not that the mention *grieves* me, no, Susie, but I think of each "sunnyside" where we have sat together, and lest there be no more, I guess is what makes the tears come. Mattie was here last evening, and we sat on the front door stone, and talked about life and love, and whispered our childish fancies about such blissful things—the evening was gone so soon, and I walked home with Mattie beneath the silent moon, and wished for you, and Heaven. You did not come, Darling, but a bit of Heaven did, or so it *seemed* to us, as we walked side by side and wondered if that great blessedness which may be our's sometime, is granted now, to some. Those unions, my dear Susie, by which two lives are one, this sweet and strange adoption wherein we can but look, and are not yet admitted, how it can fill the heart, and make it gang wildly beating, how it will take *us* one day, and make *us* all it's own, and we shall not run away from it, but lie still and be happy!

You and I have been strangely silent upon this subject, Susie,



we have often touched upon it, and as quickly fled away, as children shut their eyes when the sun is too bright for them. I have always hoped to know if you had no dear fancy, illumining all your life, no one of whom you murmured in the faithful ear of night—and at whose side in fancy, you walked the livelong day; and when you come home, Susie, we must speak of these things. How dull our lives must seem to the bride, and the plighted maiden, whose days are fed with gold, and who gathers pearls every evening; but to the *wife*, Susie, sometimes the *wife forgotten*, our lives perhaps seem dearer than all others in the world; you have seen flowers at morning, *satisfied* with the dew, and those same sweet flowers at noon with their heads bowed in anguish before the mighty sun; think you these thirsty blossoms will *now* need naught but—*dew*? No, they will cry for sunlight, and pine for the burning noon, tho' it scorches them, scathes them; they have got through with peace—they know that the man of noon, is *mightier* than the morning and their life is henceforth to him. Oh, Susie, it is dangerous, and it is all too dear, these simple trusting spirits, and the spirits mightier, which we cannot resist! It does so rend me, Susie, the thought of it when it comes, that I tremble lest at sometime I, too, am yielded up. Susie, you will forgive me my amatory strain—it has been a very long one, and if this saucy page did not here bind and fetter me, I might have had no end.

I have got the letter, Susie, dear little bud, and all—and the tears came again, that alone in this big world, I am not *quite* alone. Such tears are showers—friend, thro' which when smiles appear, the angels call them rainbows, and mimic them in Heaven.

And now in four weeks more—you are mine, *all* mine, except I *lend* you a little occasionally to Hattie and Mattie, if they promise not to lose you, and to bring you back very soon. I shall not count the days. I shall not fill my cups with this expected happiness, for perhaps if I do, the angels, being thirsty, will drink them up—I shall only *hope*, my Susie, and *that* tremblingly, for hav'nt barques the fullest, stranded upon the shore?

God is good, Susie, I trust he will save you, I pray that in his good time we once more meet each other, but if this life holds not another meeting for us, remember also, Susie, that it had no *parting* more, wherever that hour finds us, for which we have hoped so long, we

shall not be separated, neither death, nor the grave can part us, so that we only *love*!

Your Emilie—

Austin has come and gone; life is so still again; why must the storm have calms? I hav'nt seen Root this term, I guess Mattie and I, are not sufficient for him! When will you come again, in a week? Let it be a *swift* week!

Vinnie sends much love, and Mother; and might I be so bold as to enclose a *remembrance*?

MANUSCRIPT: HLC (L 20). Ink. Dated: Friday morning.

PUBLICATION: LL 43, in part.

Sue returned home early in July.

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

11 June 1852

I have but one thought, Susie, this afternoon of June, and *that* of you, and I have one prayer, only; dear Susie, *that* is *for* you. That you and I in *hand* as we e'en *do* in heart, might ramble away as children, among the woods and fields, and forget these many years, and these sorrowing cares, and each become a child again—I would it were so, Susie, and when I look around me and find myself alone, I sigh for you again; little sigh, and vain sigh, which will not bring you home.

I need you more and more, and the great world grows wider, and dear ones fewer and fewer, every day that you stay away—I miss my biggest heart; my own goes wandering round, and calls for Susie—Friends are too dear to sunder, Oh they are far too few, and how soon they will go away where you and I cannot find them, *don't* let us forget these things, for their remembrance *now* will save us many an anguish when it is *too late* to love them! Susie, forgive me Darling, for every word I say—my heart is full of you, none other than you in my thoughts, yet when I seek to say to you something not for the world, words fail me. If you were here—and Oh that you were, my Susie, we need not talk at all, our eyes would whisper for us, and

20 June 1852

your hand fast in mine, we would not ask for language—I try to bring you nearer, I chase the weeks away till they are quite departed, and fancy you have come, and I am on my way through the green lane to meet you, and my heart goes scampering so, that I have much ado to bring it back again, and learn it to be patient, till that dear Susie comes. Three weeks—they can't last always, for surely they must go with their little brothers and sisters to their long home in the west!

I shall grow more and more impatient until that dear day comes, for till now, I have only *mourned* for you; now I begin to *hope* for you.

Dear Susie, I have tried hard to think what you would love, of something I might send you—I at last saw my little Violets, they begged me to let *them* go, so here they are—and with them as Instructor, a bit of knightly grass, who also begged the favor to accompany them—they are but small, Susie, and I fear not fragrant now, but they will speak to you of warm hearts at home, and of the something faithful which “never slumbers nor sleeps”—Keep them 'neath your pillow, Susie, they will make you dream of blue-skies, and home, and the “blessed countrie”! You and I will have an hour with “Edward” and “Ellen Middleton”, sometime when you get home—we must find out if some things contained therein are true, and if they are, what you and me are coming to!

Now, farewell, Susie, and Vinnie sends her love, and mother her's, and I add a kiss, shyly, lest there is somebody there! Don't let them see, *will* you Susie?

Emilie—

Why can't I be a Delegate to the great Whig Convention?—don't I know all about Daniel Webster, and the Tariff, and the Law? Then, Susie I could see you, during a pause in the session—but I don't like this country at all, and I shant stay here any longer! “*Delenda est*” America, Massachusetts and all!

open me carefully

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 2). Ink. Dated: Friday afternoon. Addressed on the fold: Miss Susan H. Gilbert./40-Lexington St./Baltimore./Md-  
PUBLICATION: FF 215-217, in part.

Edward Dickinson was a delegate to the national Whig convention, which met in Baltimore on 16 June 1852. He delivered the letter.

Your last letter to us, Austin, was very short and very unsatisfying—we do not feel this week that we have heard anything from you for a very great while, and father's absence, besides, makes us all very lonely.

I infer from what you said, that my last letter didn't suit you, and you tried to write as bad a one as you possibly could, to pay me for it; but before I began to write, Vinnie said *she* was going to, and I mustn't write any news, as she was depending upon it to make her letter of, so I merely talked away as I should if we'd been together, leaving all the matter o'fact to our practical sister Vinnie—well, we had calls Sunday evening, until too late to write, and Vinnie was sound asleep when the mail went out in the morning. I was determined to send you *my* letter, that very day, so Vinnie's note of news, for which I had starved my own, is as yet unwritten. We have looked every day for a long letter from you, and really felt sadly enough when Saturday came without it. I should have written you sooner, but we have had Miss Bangs cutting dresses for us this week, and have been very busy, so I couldn't possibly write, but we have all *thought* of you, and *that* is better than writing. Father has not got home, and we don't know when to expect him. We had a letter from him yesterday, but he didn't say when he should come. He writes that he “should think the whole world was there, and some from other worlds”—he says he meets a great many old friends and acquaintances, and forms a great many new ones—he writes in very fine spirits, and says he enjoys himself very much. I think it will do him the very most good of anything in the world, and I do feel happy to have father at last, among men who sympathize with him, and know what he really is. I wish you could have gone with him, you would have enjoyed it so, but I didn't much suppose that selfish old school would let you. Father writes that he's called on Sue, twice, and found her very glad to see him. She will be home in a fortnight—only think of that!

Mattie gets along nicely—she sends her love to you—she is down here most every day. Abby Wood had a little party, week before last—a very pleasant one. Last week, the Senior Levee came off at the Presi-

dent's. Vinnie went to the Levce, and I went to walk with Emmons. Vinnie had a nice time — said everything went off pleasantly, and very much as usual. I believe Prof. Haven is to give one soon — and there is to be a Reception at Prof. Tyler's, next Tuesday evening, which I shall attend. You see Amherst is growing lively, and by the time you come, everything will be in a buzz.

Uncle Samuel's family are here, boarding at Mr Palmer's. Uncle Samuel was here himself, about a week, and is now in New York. Arthur, the oldest one, is going to work on a farm this summer, so as to grow stout and strong, before entering college. Porter Cowles is going to take him. Mr Bowdoin is here still — comes round with the news every day — he has formed quite a fancy for Mat, since Mary became so feeble — has called on her two or three times, been to walk with her once, and walked home with her from the President's. Mat smiles and looks very peculiarly when we mention Mr Bowdoin. I hav'nt seen Mary Warner since you went away — the last time I *heard* of her, she had Thurston and Benjamin, *weeding her flower garden*. *That's* romantic, isn't it — she better have her heart wed, before she weeds her garden!

As father has'nt come, Mother cant say certainly how soon you will see her in Boston; just as soon as he comes, she will go, tho, and we shall let you know. She has got her new teeth in, and I think they look very nicely. We all send you our love.

Emilie.

I hope you will write me a letter as soon as you possibly can.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday morning. Envelope addressed: W<sup>m</sup> Austin Dickinson/Care of Joel Norcross./31 — Milk St./Boston. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Jun 21.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 108, in part; L (1931) 104, in part; *Home* 246–247, entire.

The *Hampshire and Franklin Express*, 10 September 1852, reported that Edward Dickinson "had the honor to represent the old Sixth District in the National nominating Convention. To that convention he carried a firm and unwavering friendship to Daniel Webster, which led him to stand by the great statesman through the fifty-five ballots of that body."

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

27 June 1852

My Susie's last request; yes, darling, I grant it, tho' few, and fleet the days which separate us now — but six more weary days, but six more twilight evens, and my lone little fireside, my *silent* fireside is once more full.

"We are seven, and one in heaven," we are *three* next Saturday, if I have *mine* and heaven has none.

Do not mistake, my Susie, and rather than the car, ride on the golden wings where you will ne'er come back again — do not forget the lane, and the little cot that stands by it, when people from the clouds will beckon you, and smile at you, to have you go with them — Oh Susie, my child, I sit here by my window, and look each little while down towards that golden gateway beneath the western trees, and I fancy I see you coming, you trip upon the green grass, and I hear the crackling leaf under your little shoe; I hide behind the chair, I think I will surprise you, I grow too eager to see you, I hasten to the door, and start to find me that you are not there. And very, very often when I have waked from sleep, *not quite* waked, I have been sure I saw you, and your dark eye beamed on me with such a look of tenderness that I could only weep, and bless God for you.

Susie, will you indeed come home next Saturday, and be my own again, and kiss me as you used to? Shall I indeed behold you, not "darkly, but face to face" or am I *fancying* so, and dreaming blessed dreams from which the day will wake me? I hope for you so much, and feel so eager for you, feel that I *cannot* wait, feel that *now* I must have you — that the expectation once more to see your face again, makes me feel hot and feverish, and my heart beats so fast — I go to sleep at night, and the first thing I know, I am sitting there wide awake, and clasping my hands tightly, and thinking of next Saturday, and "never a bit" of you.

Sometimes I must have Saturday before tomorrow comes, and I wonder if it w'd make any difference with God, to give it to me *today*, and I'd let him have Monday, to make him a Saturday; and then I feel so funnily, and wish the precious day would'nt come quite so soon, till I could know how to feel, and get my thoughts ready for it.

Why, Susie, it seems to me as if my absent Lover was coming



home so soon — and my heart must be so busy, making ready for him.

While the minister this morning was giving an account of the Roman Catholic system, and announcing several facts which were usually startling, I was trying to make up my mind wh' of the two was prettiest to go and welcome *you* in, my fawn colored dress, or my blue dress. Just as I had decided by all means to wear the blue, down came the minister's fist with a terrible rap on the counter, and Susie, it scared me so, I hav'nt got over it yet, but I'm glad I reached a conclusion! I walked home from meeting with Mattie, and *incidentally* quite, something was said of you, and I think one of us remarked that you would be here next Sunday; well — Susie — what it was I dont presume to know, but my gaiters seemed to leave me, and I seemed to move on wings — and I move on wings now, Susie, on wings as white as snow, and as bright as the summer sunshine — because I am with you, and so few short days, you are with me at home. Be patient then, my Sister, for the hours will haste away, and Oh so soon! Susie, I write most hastily, and very carelessly too, for it is time for me to get the supper, and my mother is gone and besides, my darling, so near I seem to you, that I *disdain* this pen, and wait for a *warmer* language. With Vinnie's love, and my love, I am once more

Your Emilie —

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 7). Ink. Dated: Sunday afternoon.

PUBLICATION: FF 217–219, in part.

After ED's father returned from Baltimore, her mother went to Boston to visit Austin, and probably stayed with the Norcrosses. Sue was to return to Amherst on July 3. Austin completed the school year in Boston, and came home on July 26. Since the principal correspondents were now both at home, a gap of several months appears before the next letter. The quotation in the second paragraph alludes to Wordsworth's poem "We Are Seven," though it is two of the children who are in heaven, not one.

97

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

early December 1852

Dear Friend.

I regret to inform you that at 3. oclock yesterday, my mind came to a stand, and has since then been stationary.

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Ere this intelligence reaches you, I shall probably be a snail. By this untoward providence a mental and moral being has been swept ruthlessly from her sphere. Yet we should not repine — "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform, he plants his foot upon the sea, and rides upon the storm," and if it be his will that I become a *bear* and bite my fellow men, it will be for the highest good of this fallen and perishing world. If the gentleman in the air, will please to stop throwing snowballs, I may meet you again, otherwise it is uncertain. My parents are pretty well — Gen Wolf is here — we're looking for Major Pitcairn in the afternoon stage.

We were much afflicted yesterday, by the supposed removal of *our Cat* from time to Eternity.

She returned, however, last evening, having been detained by the storm, beyond her expectations.

I see by the Boston papers that Giddings is up again — hope you'll arrange with Corwin, and have the North all straight.

Fine weather for sledding — have spoken for 52 cord black walnut. We need some paths our way, shant you come out with the team?

Yours till death —

Judah

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 176). Ink. Dated: Friday noon.

PUBLICATION: LL 55, in part, and altered.

Sue was in Amherst. In the autumn of 1852, Edward Dickinson was the Whig candidate for Congress from the tenth district, and was elected in December. The gentlemen identified with the historic figures General Wolfe (who died victorious at Quebec) and Major Pitcairn (fatally wounded at Bunker Hill) were probably political visitors, calling on Edward Dickinson. Joshua Reed Giddings broke with the Whig party in 1848. Thomas Corwin, Fillmore's Secretary of the Treasury, had also opposed the Fugitive Slave Law endorsed by the Whig convention. The quotation from William Cowper's "Light Shining out of Darkness," with which ED would be especially familiar from its hymn setting, seems to have been from memory, since it alters the third line, which reads: "He plants his footsteps in the sea." The historical associations with the name Judah are so many that the private association for which ED uses it as a signature makes any conjecture about its intent in this letter, largely a *jeu d'esprit*, pure guesswork.

[ 217 ]

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

about 13 January 1853

Dear Emily—

I fear you will be lonely this dark and stormy day, and I send this little messenger to say you must not be.

The day is long to me, because I have no Vinnie, and I think of those today who never had a Vinnie, and I'm afraid they are lone. I have wanted to come and see you—I have tried earnestly to come, but always have been detained by some ungenerous care, and now this falling snow, sternly, and silently, lifts up its hand between.

How glad I am affection can always leave and go—How glad that the drifts of snow pause at the outer door, and go no farther, and it is as warm within as if no winter came! Dear Emily, do not sorrow, upon this stormy day—“into each life some ‘flakes’ must fall, some days must be dark and dreary.” Let us think of the pleasant summer whose gardens are far away, and whose Robins are singing always!

If it were not for blossoms we know that we shall see, and for that brighter sunshine above—beyond—away—these days were dark indeed, but I try to keep recollecting that we are away from home—and have many brothers and sisters who are expecting us. Dear Emilie—don't weep, for you will both be so happy, where “sorrow cannot come.”

Vinnie left her Testament on a little stand in our room, and it made me think of her, so I thought I w'd open it, and the first words I read were in those sweetest verses—“Blessed are the poor—Blessed are they that mourn—Blessed are they that weep, for they shall be comforted.” Dear Emily, I thought of you, and I hastened away to send this message to you.

Emilie—

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL. Ink. Dated: Thursday evening.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 134–135, in part; *L* (1931) 134, in part.

The year is conjectured from the handwriting. There was a heavy snowstorm on January 13. Professor Fowler was still in Europe. Lavinia was presumably making one of her customary visits to Boston. The quoted lines in the third paragraph paraphrase Longfellow's “The Rainy Day” (see letter no. 36).

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

early 1853?

Dear Emily,

I said when the Barber came, I would save you a little ringlet, and fulfilling my promise, I send you one today. I shall never give you anything again that will be half so full of sunshine as this wee lock of hair, but I wish no hue more sombre might ever fall to you.

All your gifts should be rainbows, if I owned *half* the skies, and but a bit of sea to furnish raindrops for me. Dear Emily—this is all—It will serve to make you remember me when locks are crisp and gray, and the quiet cap, and the spectacles, and “John Anderson my Joe” are all that is left of me.

I must have one of yours—Please spare me a little lock sometime when you have your scissors, and there is one to spare.

Your very aff

Emilie—

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL. Pencil. Addressed on the outer fold: Emilie.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 133; *L* (1931) 132–133.

ED was wearing her hair short at the time. In the late summer of 1852 Lavinia wrote to Austin: “Emilie's hair is cut off & shes very pretty.” (*Home* 248). Mrs. Ford's collection of her friends' hair is in NYPL, but ED's ringlet is missing.

To John L. Graves

about February 1853

Cousin John.

I thought perhaps you and your friend would come in to drink *wine* this evening, as I asked you to do, after Vinnie got home, but I want to tell you something.

Vinnie and I are asked out this evening, and Vinnie's obliged to go. It will not be as pleasant when she is absent from home, and now I want to know if you will be busy *next* week, and if not, wont you save an evening, or an hour of one, when you will come and see us, and taste the currant wine?

Please tell your friend — Mr Emmons, and invite him to come with you upon another evening.

Vinnie and I are sorry, but fortune is unkind.

Your Cousin Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (G 5). Ink. Dated: Friday afternoon.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 224-225.

John Graves, now a sophomore at Amherst College, had introduced his friend Henry Vaughan Emmons to the Dickinson girls a year earlier. ED counted Graves as her friend, yet the formal address was customary. Vinnie had been away in January.

101

To John L. Graves

about February 1853

I wonder if Cousin John has a lesson to learn this evening?

Emilie —

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (G 9). Pencil. Addressed: Cousin John. Unpublished.

ED here suggests that John might call this evening, if he is free to do so.

102

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

24 February 1853

The sun shines warm, dear Susie, but the *sweetest* sunshine's gone, and in that far off Manchester, all my blue sky is straying this winter's afternoon. Vinnie and I are here — just where you always find us when you come in the afternoon to sit a little while — We miss your face today, and a tear fell on my work a little while ago, so I put up my sewing, and tried to write to you. I had rather have *talked*, dear Susie — it seems to me a long while since I have seen you much — it is a long while Susie, since we have been together — so long since we've spent a twilight, and spoken of what we loved, but you will come back again, and there's all the *future* Susie, which is as yet untouched! It is the brightest star in the firmament of God, and I look in it's face the oftenest.

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I ran to the door, dear Susie — I ran out in the rain, with nothing but my slippers on, I called "Susie, Susie," but you didn't look at me; then I ran to the dining room window and rapped with all my might upon the pane, but you rode right on and never heeded me.

It made me feel so lonely that I couldn't help the tears, when I came back to the table, to think I was eating breakfast, and *you* were riding away — but bye and bye I thought that the same ugly coach which carried you away, would have to bring you *back again* in but a little while, and the spite pleased me so that I didn't cry any more till the tear fell of which I told you. And now, my absent One, I am hoping the days away, till I shall see you home — I am sewing as fast as I can, I am training the stems to my flowers, I am working with all my might, so as to pause and love you, as soon as you get home.

How fast we will have to talk then — there will be those farewell gaieties — and all the days before, of which I have had no fact, and there will be your absence, and your *presence*, my Susie dear, sweetest, and brightest, and best of every and all the themes. *It is sweet* to talk, dear Susie, with those whom God has given us, lest we should be alone — and you and I have *tasted it*, and found it *very sweet*; even as fragrant flowers, o'er which the bee hums and lingers, and hums *more* for the lingering.

I find it very lonely, to part with *one of mine*, with mine *especially*, and the days will have more *hours* while you are gone away.

They played the trick yesterday — they dupe me again today.

Twelve hours make *one* — *indeed* — Call it *twice* twelve, three times twelve, and add, and add, and add, then multiply again, and we will talk about it.

"At Dover dwells George Brown Esq — Good Carlos Finch and David Fryer" — Oh Susie! How much escapes me, mine; whether you reached there safely, whether you are a stranger — or have only just *gone home* — Whether you find the friends as you fancied you should find them, or dearer than you expected?

All this, and more, Susie, I am eager to know, and I *shall* know soon, shant I? I love to *think* I shall. Oh Susie, Susie, I must call out to you in the old, old way — I must say how it seems to me to hear the clock so silently tick all the hours away, and bring me not my gift — my own, my own!

Perhaps you cant read it, Darling, it is incoherent and blind; but

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the recollection that prompts it, is very distinct and clear, and reads easily. Susie, they send their love—my mother and my sister—*thy* mother and *thy* sister, and the Youth, the Lone Youth, Susie, you know the rest!

Emilie—

Tell me when you write Susie, if I shall send my love to the Lady where you stay!

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 11). Ink. Dated: Thursday afternoon.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 220–223, in part, with alterations.

Sue was in Manchester, New Hampshire, visiting Mrs. Samuel C. Bartlett, the sister of Julius Learned, Mary Gilbert's widower. The source of ED's couplet is Longfellow's *Kavanagh*: "At Dover dwells George Brown, Esquire,/Good Christopher Finch, and Daniel Friar." The lines form a device used to reckon the day of the week on which the first of each month will fall. The twelve words represent the months of the year in sequence, and the seven initial letters, A B C D E F G, stand for the days of the week. The day on which January 1 falls in any specific year will be represented by "A" in "At." It then is simple to discover on what days the other eleven months will begin.

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

5 March 1853

I know dear Susie is busy, or she would not forget her lone little Emilie, who wrote her just as soon as she'd gone to Manchester, and has waited so patiently till she can wait no more, and the credulous little heart, fond even tho' forsaken, will get it's big black inkstand, and tell her once again how well it loves her.

Dear Susie, I have tried so hard to act patiently, not to think unkind thoughts, or cherish unkind doubt concerning one not here, I have watched the stages come in, I have tried to look indifferent, and hum a snatch of tune when I heard Father and Austin coming, and knew how soon they'd bring me a dear letter from you, or I should look in the hat, and find it all empty—and here comes Saturday, and tomorrow the world stands still, and I shall have no message from my dear Susie!

Why dont you write me, Darling? Did I in that quick letter say anything which grieved you, or made it hard for you to take your usual pen and trace affection for your bad, sad Emilie?

Then Susie, you must forgive me before you sleep tonight, for I will not shut my eyes until you have kissed my cheek, and told me you would love me.

Oh it has been so still, since when you went away, nothing but just the ticking of the two ceaseless clocks—swiftly the "Little mystic one, no human eye hath seen," but slowly and solemnly the tall clock upon the mantel—you remember *that* clock, Susie. It has the oddest way of striking twelve in the morning, and six in the afternoon, just as soon as you come. I am trying to teach it a few of the proprieties of life, now you are gone away, and the poor thing does indeed seem quite obedient, and goes slowly eno', but as soon as you're back again, Susie, it will be the same graceless one it ever used to be, and only gallop with accelerated speed, to make up for resting now.

Dear Susie, it is harder to live alone than it was when you were in Baltimore, and the days went slowly, *then*—they go e'en slower than they did while you were in the school—or else I grow impatient, and cannot brook as easily absence from those I love. I dont know which it is—I only know that when you shall come back again, the Earth will seem more beautiful, and bigger than it does now, and the blue sky from the window will be all dotted with gold—though it may not be evening, or time for the stars to come.

It is pleasant to talk of you with Austin—and Vinnie and to find how you are living in every one of their hearts, and making it warm and bright there—as if it were a sky, and a sweet summer's noon. Austin has gone this morning—the last little thing I did for him was while they were at breakfast, to write on four envelopes for him to send to you—

It made me smile, Susie, to think how Little Argus was cheated after all—and I smiled again, at thinking of something holier, of something from the skies, come Earthward.

Dear Susie, I dont forget you a moment of the hour, and when my work is finished, and I have got the tea, I slip thro' the little entry, and out at the front door, and stand and watch the West, and remember all of mine—yes, Susie—the golden West, and the great, silent Eternity, for ever folded there, and bye and bye it will open it's ever-

lasting, arms, and gather us all—all; Good bye, dear Susie—they all send you their love—

Emilie—

Susie—will you give my love to Mrs Bartlett, and tell her the fortnight is out next Wednesday, and I thought she m't like to know!

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 8). Ink. Dated: Saturday morning.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 188–189, in part.

Austin left on March 5 for Cambridge, to enter the Harvard Law School; the term had already begun two days earlier. The four envelopes ED addressed for him to send Sue indicate that his courtship is developing. For an explanation of the "Little mystic one," see the note for letter no. 60.

104

To Austin Dickinson

8 March 1853

Dear Austin.

Dont feel lonely, for we think of you all the time, and shall love you and recollect you all the while you are gone. Your letter made us all feel sadly, and we had a sober evening thinking of you at Cambridge, while we were all at home.

I hope you are better now, and like the looks of things better than you thought you should at first. You were perfectly tired out when you went away from home and I thought you'd feel rather lonely until you got rested a little and then things would look bright again. I am glad you think of us, and think you would like to see us, for I've thought a good many times that you would soon forget us, on going away from home. I dont think you can miss us more than we do you, Austin, and dont think we have forgotten you, because you are away.

I am glad you found a letter waiting for you from Sue for I think it must have made things seem a little more like home.

I hav'nt heard from her yet. I dont much expect to now—though I wrote her again on Saturday. I had a letter for Sue directed to my care last evening—the outside envelope in Mr Learned's hand, and containing one from Martha. I shall send it to Sue today.

Father went to New York, this morning—he thinks he shall come home Thursday, tho' he dont know certainly.

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We have sent you a *table cover* this morning by Mr Green—also two little wash cloths, which we found and thought you would like. Mother wants me to tell you if there's anything else you would like, that you must let us know and we will send it to you by the first opportunity—also to send your washing home every time you can find a chance, and your clothes shall be well taken care of. Above all things, take care of yourself, and dont get sick away, for it would be very lonely for you to be sick among strangers, and you're apt to be careless at home. What a time you must have had getting on in the snow storm! We felt very anxious about you—mother, particularly, and wondered how you would get through, and yet I knew you never had any trouble anywhere, and I really didn't think that with you on board the cars, there could anything happen. But Austin, you are there—the time will soon be over, and we shall all be together again as we were of old—you know how fast time *can* fly, if we only let it go—then recollect dear Austin, that none of us are gone where we cannot come home again, and the separations *here* are but for a little while. We will write again very soon.

Emilie.

Mother and Vinnie send much love, and say you must'nt be lonely. I have done what you wanted me to.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Tuesday morning. An attempt has been made to erase the words "from Sue" in the third paragraph.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 260–261.

During the rest of the year ED and other members of the family, in writing to Austin, used envelopes addressed and franked by Edward Dickinson who learned, after he went to Washington in December, that the privilege did not extend so far.

The news about the Newman family in letter no. 106 makes clear that Edward Dickinson's trip to New York was made in connection with their affairs. His sister Mary, and her husband Mark Newman, had both died within the year, and Edward Dickinson was guardian of their son and four daughters. Martha Gilbert was living with her brother at Grand Haven, Michigan.

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To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

about March 1853

Write! Comrade, write!

On this wondrous sea  
Sailing silently,  
Ho! Pilot, ho!  
Knowest thou the shore  
Where no breakers roar—  
Where the storm is oer?

In the peaceful west  
Many the sails at rest—  
The anchors fast—  
Thither I pilot *thee*—  
Land Ho! Eternity!  
Ashore at last!

Emilie—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 73). Pencil. Addressed: Susie.

PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1955) 6–7.

This note in verse was enclosed in one of the letters written at this time. ED wrote Austin on March 18: "I've written her three times." The message may say more than "Write me a letter." ED had begun writing poetry and was probably encouraging Sue to do the same.

To Austin Dickinson

12 March 1853

Dear Austin.

I am afraid you think that we have all forgotten you, we hav'nt written now for so many days, but we hav'nt, and I will tell you why we have kept still so long. We thought from your first letter that you'd probably write us again in a day or two, and there might be some thing which you would want to know, so we waited to hear from you—well, you did not seem to write so soon as we expected, and I

thought Wednesday morning I wouldn't wait any longer, but we know not what is before us.

A little while after breakfast Vinnie went over to Mr Kellogg's on an errand—wasn't going to stay but a minute—well, two hours had passed away and nothing was seen of Vinnie, and I had begun to wonder what had become of her, when Emmeline walked in with her, and helped her onto the Lounge. Her right hand was all done up, and she looked so faint I thought somebody had killed her. It seems she went to the door and found the Dog lying there, and thought she would pat him a little so that he wouldn't growl, but he did growl terribly, then snapped at her hand, and bit the thumb on her right hand, almost thro from one side to the other. Her hand pained her so much that she fainted constantly, and as soon as she was able Emmeline came home with her. Mr Kellogg's folks felt dreadfully about it, they did everything they could—Em went for Dr Woodman, and we had quite a time—this was when father was gone, and of course it frightened us more, but you needn't be scared any longer Austin, for she's doing nicely now. She can't comb her hair or dress her, or help herself at all, so you see I have my hands full, for besides doing all this, I have to do her usual work. *That's* the reason I hav'nt written you Austin, many a time before. I couldn't get time to do it, but I've thought of you just as much, and more, than if I c'd have written, and we all miss you every day, and want to see you more than I can possibly tell you. I am so glad to know you're happier, and that Cambridge looks brighter to you. We enjoyed your letter very much and laughed heartily at it—*father* particularly, seemed to think it "uncommon" fine. He got home Thursday night, at about 12 o'clock.

The Newman family are coming here about the middle of April—another fact which will please you. Uncle Sweetser and his wife are going to Europe in May, and Elisabeth and their children are coming to Amherst to board at Mr Newman's for the summer! Such intelligence needs no comments. I have telegraphed to Sue. Don't say anything about it in the letter you write me next, for father reads all your letters before he brings them home, and it might make him feel unpleasantly.

I hope we shall all be spared to have one *kitchen meeting*, and express our several minds on this infamous proceeding, but I won't trouble you. You asked about the Paper. Daniel Webster of Deer-



field cant come on account of the limited salary — Mr [Samuel] Nash, on account of his eyes, and as Mr Trumbull has gone, they got Mr Sydney Adams, with the *assistance of others* to get out the this weeks one. Bowdoin "moves on" like snails. I have heard once from Susie — not much tho'. We will hem the crash, and send it to you by the first opportunity. Mother wants you to get a cheap Comforter and put on the palmleaf mattress; — she says t'will be easier to you.

We all send you our love. Vinnie says she will write as soon as she uses her hand. Write us soon.

Aff  
Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Saturday morning. Postmarked: Mar. 12.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 263–264.

Edward Dickinson's guardianship of the Newman girls put the whole family in a difficult position. Though Newman had left a comfortable estate, he bequeathed most of it to missionary societies. The girls came to Amherst accompanied by their father's sister, Mrs. Fay, and lived in the house owned by Dickinson, on the east side of the common. The Sweetser children were to be cared for during the summer by their aunt Elizabeth, the still unmarried youngest Dickinson sister, who divided her time among various members of the family. The "Paper" alluded to was the *Hampshire and Franklin Express*, which was undergoing a change of management under the ownership of the Adams family; J. R. Trumbull no longer served as editor.

107

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

12 March 1853

Dear Susie —

I'm so amused at my own ubiquity that I hardly know what to say, or how to relate the story of the wonderful correspondent. First, I arrive from Amherst, then comes a ponderous tome from the learned Halls of Cambridge, and again by strange metamorphosis I'm just from Michigan, and am Mattie and Minnie and Lizzie in one wondering breath — Why, dear Susie, it must'nt scare you if I loom up from Hindoostan, or drop from an Appenine, or peer at you suddenly

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from the hollow of a tree, calling myself King Charles, Sancho Panza, or Herod, King of the Jews — I suppose it is all the same.

"Miss Mills," that is, Miss Julia, never *dreamed* of the depths of my *clandestiny*, and if I stopped to think of the figure I was cutting, it would be the last of me, and you'd never hear again from you poor Jeremy Bentham —

But I say to my mind, "tut, tut," "Rock a bye baby" conscience, and so I keep them still!

And as for the pulling of wool over the eyes of Manchester, I trust to the courtesy of the Recording Angel, to say nothing of *that*. One thing is true, Darling, the world will be none the wiser, for Emilie's omnipresence, and two big hearts will beat stouter, as tidings from *me* come in. I love the opportunity to serve those who are mine, and to soften the least asperity in the path which ne'er "ran smooth," is a delight to me. So Susie, I set the trap and catch the little mouse, and love to catch him dearly, for I think of you and Austin — and know it pleases you to have my tiny services. Dear Susie, you are gone — One would hardly think I had lost you to hear this revelry, but your absence insanes me so — I do not feel so peaceful, when you are gone from me — All life looks differently, and the faces of my fellows are not the same they wear when you are with me. I think it is this, dear Susie; you sketch my pictures for me, and 'tis at their sweet colorings, rather than this dim real that I am used, so you see when you go away, the world looks strangely, and I find I need more vail — Frank Peirce thinks I mean *herage* vail, and makes a sprightly plan to import the "article," but dear Susie knows what I mean. Do you ever look homeward, Susie, and count the lonely hours Vinnie and I are spending, because that you are gone?

Yes, Susie, very lonely, and yet is it very sweet too to know that you are happy, and to think of you in the morning, and at eventide, and noon, and always as smiling and looking up for joy — I could not spare you *else*, dear Sister, but to be sure your life is warm with such a sunshine, helps me to chase the shadows fast stealing upon mine — I *knew* you would be happy, and you know now of something I had told you.

There *are* lives, sometimes, Susie — Bless God that we catch faint glimpses of his brighter Paradise from *occasional* Heavens *here*!

Stay, Susie; yet *not* stay! I cannot spare your sweet face another

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hour more, and yet I want to have you gather more sheaves of joy — for bleak, and waste, and barren, are most of the fields found here, and I want you to *fill* the *garner*. Then you may come, dear Susie, and from our silent home, Vinnie and I shall meet you. There is much to tell you, Susie, but I cannot bring the deeds of the rough and jostling world into that sweet inclosure; they are fitter *fonder*, *here* — but Susie, I do bring you a Sister's fondest love — and gentlest tenderness; little indeed, but "a'," and I know you will not refuse them. Please remember me to your friend, and write soon to

your lonely  
Emilie —

Vinnie sends you her love — She would write, but has hurt her hand — Mother's love too — Oh Susie!

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 4). Ink. Dated: Saturday noon.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 190–192, in part.

In the first paragraph ED alludes to the various envelopes addressed in her hand: first her own letters to Sue; then Austin's, in the envelopes she addressed for him; and finally those sent in her care and forwarded to Sue from her relatives in Michigan, her sister Martha and the two sisters-in-law. Julia Mills, in *David Copperfield*, was the bosom friend of Dora Spenslow, and described as "interested in others' loves, herself withdrawn." It is Austin who is identified with the philosopher and jurist Bentham.

108

To Austin Dickinson

18 March 1853

Dear Austin,

I presume you remember a story Vinnie tells of a Breach of promise Case where the correspondence between the parties consisted of a reply from the girl to one she had never received, but was daily expecting — well I am writing an answer to the letter I hav'nt had, so you will see the force of the accompanying anecdote. I have been looking for you ever since despatching my last, but this is a fickle world, and it's a great source of complacency that t'will all be burned up bye and bye. I should be pleased with a line when you've published your work to Father, if it's perfectly convenient. Your letters are very funny indeed

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— about the only jokes we have, now you and Sue are gone, and I hope you will send us one as often as you can. Father takes great delight in your remarks to him — puts on his spectacles and reads them o'er and o'er as if it was a blessing to have an only son.

He reads all the letters you write as soon as he gets, at the post office, no matter to whom addressed. I presume when Sue gets back, and has directed to her, he will take them and read them first. Well, I was telling you, he reads them once at the office, then he makes me read them loud at the supper table again, and when he gets home in the evening, he cracks a few walnuts, puts his spectacles on, and with your last in his hand, sits down to enjoy the evening. He remarked in confidence to me this morning, that he "guessed you saw through things there" — of course I answered "yes sir," but what the thought conveyed I remained in happy ignorance. Whether he meant to say that you saw through *the Judges*, overcoats and all, I could not quite determine but I'm sure he designed to compliment you very highly.

I do think it's so funny — you and father do nothing but "fisticuff" all the while you're at home, and the minute you are separated, you become such devoted friends; but this is a checkered life.

I believe at this moment, Austin, that there's no body living for whom father has such respect as for you, and yet your conduct together is quite peculiar indeed. But my paper is getting low, and I must hasten to tell you that we are very happy to hear good news from you — that we hope you'll have pleasant times, and learn a great deal while you're gone, and come back to us greater and happier for the life lived at Cambridge. We miss you more and more. I wish that we could see you, but letters come the next — write them often, and tell us everything!

Aff  
Emilie.

Dear Austin, I've just decided that my yarn is not quite spun, so I'll spin it a little longer.

Vinnie's hand is getting well, tho' she cant sew or write with it. She sends her love to you, and says she shall write a note, as soon as her hand gets able.

Anna Warner's a little better, tho' the *medical faculty* dare as yet give little encouragement of her return thitherward. Mary is at present incarcerated, and becomes in the public eye, more and more of a mar-

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tyr daily. The Quinsy approached Miss Goudy [?], but was dexterously warded off by homeopathic glances from a certain Dr Gregg, of whom you may hear in Boston. Professor Warner, and consort, and surviving son, are much as usual. Father's Cummington friend, late from State's prison in Brooklyn, took tea with us this week. He has *advanced* somewhat since we children have seen him.

Jerry [Holden?] and Mrs Mack inquire for "Mr Austin." Most all of the folks we asked here have made their "party call," and we have had our hands full in entertaining them. You must tell us about the party which you attend at Miss C's. I have not heard from Sue again, tho' I've written her three times. I suppose she'll be coming home Saturday, and I'll tell you something funny the next time I write.

We all send you much love, and wish you were here today, so we could talk with you.

Emilie again.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Friday morning. Postmarked: Mar 18. An attempt has been made at some time to erase the words "and Sue" in the first paragraph. ED's postscript is written on a separate sheet.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 112-113, in part; *L* (1931) 107-109, in part; *Home* 265-267, entire.

Anna Warner was the younger sister of Mary Warner, one of ED's close friends (see letter no. 118). Jerry, whose name appears several times in the letters of 1853-54, was probably the "faithful hand," Jeremiah Holden, mentioned in letter no. 80. For further details about Mrs. Mack, see Appendix 2.

To Austin Dickinson

24 March 1853

Dear Austin.

How much I miss you, how lonely it is this morning—how I wish you were here, and how very much I thank you for sending me that long letter, which I got Monday evening, and have read a great many times, and presume I shall again, unless I soon have another.

I find life not so bright without Sue and you, or Martha, and for

a little while I hav'nt cared much about it. How glad I was to know that you had'nt forgotten us, and looked forward to home, and the rustic seat, and summer, with so much happiness. You wonder if we think of you as much as you of us—I guess so, Austin—it's a great deal anyhow, and to look at the empty nails, and the empty chairs in the kitchen almost obscures my sight, if I were used to tears. But I think of the rustic seat, and I think of the July evening just as the day is done, and I read of the one come back, worth all the "ninety and nine" who have not gone from home, and these things strengthen me for many a day to come.

I'm so glad you are cheerful at Cambridge, for cheerful indeed one must be to write such a comic affair as your last letter to me. I believe the message to Bowdoin, w'd have killed father outright if he had'nt just fortified nature with two or three cups of tea. I could hardly contain myself sufficiently to read a thing so grotesque, but it did me good indeed, and when I had finished reading it, I said with a pleasant smile, "then there is something left"! I have been disgusted, ever since you went away, and have concluded several times that it's of no use minding it, as it is only a puff ball. But your letter so raised me up, that I look round again, and notice my fellow men.

I think you far exceed Punch—much funnier—much funnier, cant keep up with you at all!

I suppose the young lady will be getting home today—how often I thought of you yesterday afternoon and evening. I did "drop in at the Revere" a great many times yesterday. I hope you have been made happy. If so I am satisfied. I shall know when you get home.

I have been to see Mrs Cutler several times since Sue has been gone. *Mr Cutler* has missed her dreadfully, which has gratified me much. What I was going to tell you was that Mr Cutler's folks had written Sue to meet *Mr Sweetser* in Boston last week, and come to Amherst with him. I knew she would'nt come, and I couldnt help laughing to think of him returning to town alone—that's all! Sue's outwitted them all—ha-ha! just imagine me giving three cheers for American Independence!

I did get that little box, and do with it as you told me. I wrote you so at the time, but you must have forgotten it. Write again soon, Austin, for this is a lonely house, when we are not all here.

Emilie.



Mother says "tell Austin I think perhaps I shall write him a letter myself."

Mother sends her love, and is very much obliged to you for the message to her, and also for the comb, which you told us was coming. She wants you to send your clothes home just as soon as you can, for she thinks you must certainly need some by this time. We hav'nt had much maple sugar yet, but I shall send you some when Mr Green goes back. We have had some maple molasses. I know you would love some, if you were here—how I do wish you were here! I read the proclamation, and liked it very much. I had a letter from Mat, last night—she said a great deal of Sue and you, and so affectionately. If Sue thinks Mat would be willing, I will send the letter to you, the next time I write.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Thursday morning. Postmarked: Mar 24. An attempt has been made throughout to erase Sue's name.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 269–270.

According to a carefully contrived plan between Austin and Sue, the latter returned from Manchester by way of Boston. The correspondence that follows indicates that they became engaged at this time. Sue arrived in Amherst on March 24. Lavinia's hand had recovered sufficiently for her to write a note to Austin that was enclosed with Emily's.

110

To Austin Dickinson

27 March 1853

Oh my dear "Oliver," how chipper you must be since any of us have seen you? How thankful we should be that you have been brought to Greenville, and a suitable frame of mind! I really had my doubts about your reaching Canaan, but you relieve my mind, and set me at rest completely. How long it is since you've been in this state of complacency towards God and your fellow men? I think it must be sudden, hope you are not deceived, would recommend "Pilgrim's Progress," and "Baxter upon the will." Hope you have enjoyed the Sabbath, and sanctuary privileges—it isn't *all* young men that have the preached word.

Trust you enjoy your closet, and meditate profoundly upon the

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Daily Food! I shall send you Village Hymns, by earliest opportunity.

I was just this moment thinking of a favorite stanza of your's, "where congregations ne'er break up, and Sabbaths have no end."

That must be a delightful situation, certainly, quite worth the scrambling for!

Quite likely you have *tickets* for your particular friends—hope I should be included, in memory of "old clothes."

And Austin is a Poet, Austin writes a psalm. Out of the way, Pegasus, Olympus enough "to him," and just say to those "nine muses" that we have done with them!

Raised a living muse ourselves, worth the whole nine of them. Up, off, tramp!

Now Brother Pegasus, I'll tell you what it is—I've been in the habit *myself* of writing some few things, and it rather appears to me that you're getting away my patent, so you'd better be somewhat careful, or I'll call the police! Well Austin, if you've stumbled through these two pages of folly, without losing your hat or getting lost in the mud, I will try to be sensible, as suddenly as I can, before you are quite disgusted. *Mademoiselle* has come, quite to the surprise of us all. I concluded you had concluded to sail for Australia. Sue's very sober yet, she thinks it's pretty desolate without old Mr Brown.

She seems to be absent, sometimes, on account of the "old un," and I think you're a villainous rascal to entrap a young woman's "phelinks" in such an awful way.

You deserve, let me see; you deserve hot irons, and Chinese Tartary; and if I were Mary Jane, I would give you one such "mitten" Sir. as you never had before! I declare, I have half a mind to *throw a stone* as it is, and kill five barn door fowls, but I wont, I'll be considerate! Miss Susie was here on Friday, was here on Saturday, and Miss Emilie, there, on Thursday. I suppose you will go to the "*Hygeum*" as usual, this evening. Think it a dreadful thing for a young man under influences to frequent a hotel, evenings! Am glad our Pilgrim Fathers got safely out of the way, before such shocking times! Are you getting on well with "the work," and have you engaged the Harpers? Shall bring in a bill for my Lead Pencils, 17, in number, disbursed at times to you, as soon as the publishment. Also, two envelopes daily, during *despatch of proofs*, also Johnnie Beston, also David Smith, and services from same!

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Dear Austin, I am keen, but you are a good deal keener, I am *something* of a fox, but you are more of a hound! I guess we are very good friends tho', and I guess we both love Sue just as well as we can.

You needn't laugh at my letter — it's a few *Variations of Greenville* I thought I would send to you.

Affy  
Emilie.

Love from us all. Monday noon. Oh Austin, Newton is dead. The first of my own friends. Pace.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sabbath evening. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Mar 28. An attempt has been made to erase "Sue" in the second paragraph above the signature.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 109–110, in part; *Home* 271–273, entire.

The salutation "Oliver" may be an oblique congratulation on Austin's recent and still secret engagement to Sue, suggested by Oliver's comment on his love for Celia (*As You Like It*, V, ii): ". . . my sudden wooing . . . her sudden consenting." ED applies the name again in letter no. 113. The letter from Austin to which this is a reply had enclosed a poem of his own composition, and the "*Variations of Greenville*" may allude to it. On the whole she treats his verses with more politeness than enthusiasm. Benjamin Newton died at Worcester, 24 March 1853 (see letter no. 153). Johnnie Beston was a youthful handyman; so probably was David Smith.

111

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

spring 1853

Dear Emily,

I come and see you a great many times every day, though I don't bring my body with me, so perhaps you don't know I'm there. But I love to come just as dearly, for nobody sees me then, and I sit and chat away, and look up in your face, and no matter who calls, if it's "my Lord the King," he doesn't interrupt me. Let me say, dear Emily, *both* mean to come at a time, so you shall be very sure I am sitting by your side, and not have to trust the fancy.

I want very much to be with you a long while at a time, to talk as

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we used, "Lang Syne," and during this long spring I'm very sure I shall see you, and make up the winter's loss.

I hope you are better today, dear Emilie —

Aff  
E —

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL. Pencil. Dated: Tuesday noon. Addressed: Emilie.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 134, in part; *L* (1931) 133–134, in part. The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

112

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

spring 1853

Gladly, dear Emily —

Only see how the sun shines.

Emilie —

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL. Pencil. Unpublished.

Emily may have responded to ED's last note by suggesting they go for a walk.

113

To Austin Dickinson

2 April 1853

Dear Austin.

I rather thought from your letter to me that my essays, together with the Lectures at Cambridge, were rather too much for you, so I thought I would let you have a little vacation; but you must have got rested now, so I shall renew the series. Father was very severe to me; he thought I'd been trifling with you, so he gave me quite a trimming about "Uncle Tom" and "Charles Dickens" and these "modern Literati" who he says are *nothing*, compared to past generations, who flourished when *he was a boy*. Then he said there were "somebody's *rev-e-ries*," he didn't know whose they were, that he thought were very ridiculous, so I'm quite in disgrace at present, but I think of that "pinnacle" on

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which you always mount, when anybody insults you, and that's quite a comfort to me.

We are all pretty well at home, and it seems a great while, Austin, since we have heard from you. The correspondence from "Oliver" didn't seem to say a great deal of how you were getting along, or of yourself, at Cambridge, and I am waiting patiently for one of those grand old letters you used to send us when you first went away.

I have got a nice cake of Sugar, to send you by Mr Green, and shall put in some big, sound Apples, if there is any room. Vinnie would have written you this week, but has had quite a cold, which settled in her eyes, and she has not used them much. She will write you the first of next week. Vinnie and Sue walked down to mill yesterday. Sue comes down here most every day [*one line erased*]. Emily Fowler spent yesterday afternoon here. She *inquired for you*. The girls "Musical" met here on Tuesday evening, and we had as pleasant a time as could have been expected, in view of the individuals composing the society. Dr Brewster was in town yesterday, and took tea here. He asked a great deal about you, and said he was going to write you to come and make him a visit. I told him I "presumed you'd go." Mary Aiken is in town with her children, and is going to stay a fortnight. I wonder she didn't wait, and meet *you* here in May. Thurston and Benjamin are in town on a visit.

Rufus Cowles gave us a call last evening. He is quite a young man! Mr Godfrey's folks have gone, and Mr and Mrs Pierce have moved into the house. The second generation spend most of their time in our door yard.

This is all the news I can think of, but there is one *old story*, Austin, which you may like to hear — it is that we think about you the whole of the livelong day, and talk of you when we're together, and [*several words erased*] of the golden link which binds us all together.

And you can recollect when you are busy studying, that those of us [at] home not so hard at work as you are, get much time to be with you. We all send our love to you, and hope you will be very careful, and take good care of yourself.

Emilie.

That *was* a "grand old letter," Austin, and I shall answer it soon, but I cannot today, for I feel more like writing that little note of mine, and talking of you.

Oh how much it pleased Father, and how it made us all laugh, tho' I didn't laugh so hard as the rest, on account of *my note*. There's a beautiful verse in the Bible — "Let not your heart be troubled" — so believe in [Sue?], believe also in me!

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Saturday noon. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Apr [?].

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 122-123, in part; L (1931) 120-121, in part; *Home* 273-275, entire.

One word in the last sentence is altered and illegible.

"Somebody's *rev-e-ries*" of course refers to Ik Marvel's *Reveries of a Bachelor*.

ED and her friends occasionally gathered for an evening of music (see letters no. 118 and 202).

To Austin Dickinson

8 April 1853

Dear Austin.

I've expected a letter from you every day this week, but have been disappointed — and last night I thought I should have one as surely as I lived, but I did not. I'm sure you are very busy, or I should have had a note, but I will "hide and see." It seems as if you'd been gone several hundred years, and it had been some centuries since we had heard from you, and I should like to know when you were coming home, for if it is'n't probable that you are coming *some time*, I think I shall take the stage, or run away myself. I asked you this same question in my last Saturday's letter, but you make me no reply. I can't help wondering sometimes if you think of us as often as we all do of you, and want to see us *half* as much. I think about this a great deal, and tho' I don't talk with Vinnie or Sue, about it, yet it often troubles me. I think we miss each other more every day that we grow older, for we're all unlike most everyone, and are therefore more dependent on each other for delight.

Last evening Sue and I walked down to the Old Oak Tree, and sat there and talked a long while, principally of you, and ourselves. Sue



said she guessed you were writing us, as we sat there talking, and we both wished you were there. Last Saturday evening I spent with Sue in her room — she read me some funny things which you had just written her, concerning her sorry suitors, and your *excellent suggestions* to prevent future accidents! I think you are rather hard upon unfortunate gentlemen — presume they would like to shoot you, if they knew you had won the bird.

Sue was here to supper last night, and I could'nt but think of a great many things, which we will talk about sometime, if you ever come home.

Mrs Scott is ironing here today — we shall have all your clothes in nice order to send by Mr Green. When is the good man coming? I get quite out of patience, waiting to send your sugar. I hope some country friend has given you a taste long before this time, for you must miss such little luxuries, you always get at home.

Have you had any maple molasses, or any Graham Bread, since you have been away? Every time a new loaf comes smoking on to the table, we wonder if you have any where you have gone to live.

I should love to send you a loaf, dearly, if I could. Vinnie sends her love to you, and thanks you very much for the Rubber. She finds it "capital," she says, and she will write you a letter, when the valise goes back. Mother sends her love, and says she thinks very often she shall certainly write to you, but she knows that we write so often she thinks we say all there is, and so she recollects you, but says nothing about it. I have mended your gloves, Austin, and Vinnie, all the clothes which were out of repair. I have written you in a hurry. I shall never write any more grand letters to you, but all the *little* things, and the things called *trifles*, and the crickets upon the hearth, you will be sure to hear.

Emilie.

Wont you write to me pretty soon? I send that letter of Mat's, wh' I said I would. Much love from all. We have charming weather here. I know you would be so happy, if you were at home — but you'll come soon and we shall be glad to see you.

Jerry inquires for you.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Friday noon. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Apr 9.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 275-276.

ED is writing to her brother with such frequency during these months that, as she here notes, her letters are largely concerned with the minutiae of daily living.

To Austin Dickinson

12 April 1853

Dear Austin.

You asked me in your Sat morning's letter to write you so you'd hear from me yesterday, but your letter did'nt get here until last evening, so you see I could not very well; but I must write a word this noon, to tell you that they've both come, tho' they tarried upon the way.

I thanked you for the long one in my letter of Saturday, but I want to thank you again, it was such a beautiful one, and too, for yesterday's wh' I did not expect. Sue was here when it came, and we read it together. I staid with her Saturday evening, and we spent part of it reading your long letter to me, and talking of what it made us both think of, and of you. Sue thought t'was the most beautiful letter she ever heard.

I have taken *your place* Saturday evening, since you have been away, but I will give it back to you as soon as you get home. *Get home* dear Austin — how soon now you are coming, and how happy we are in the thought of seeing you! I cant realize that you will come — it is so still and lonely, that it dont seem possible it can be otherwise, but we shall see, when the nails hang full of coats again, and the chairs hang full of hats, and I can count the slippers under the kitchen chair. Oh Austin, how we miss them, and more than them, somebody who used to hang them there, and get many a hint ungentle, to carry them away. Those times seem far off now, a great way, as things we did when children. I wish we were children now. I wish we were *always* children, how to grow up I dont know.

We had company to tea last evening, Mr and Mrs Jewett, and little Henry, then Mr Haven, and Sue — it seems much more like *home* to have her with us *always*, than to have her away. We had a delightful evening. How often we thought of you, and wished you were not away!

Father went home with Sue. I think he and mother both think a great deal of her, and nobody will make me believe that they don't think she is their's, just as much as Vinnie or you or me. Perhaps I am mistaken, but I can most always tell anything that I want to. Emmons brought me a beautiful bouquet of Arbutus, last evening — it's the first I have seen this year. Cousin John has made us an Aeolian Harp, which plays beautifully, alone, whenever there is a breeze.

Austin, you mustn't care if your letters do not get here just when you think they will — they are always new to us, and delightful always, and the more you send us, the happier we shall be. We all send our love to you, and think much and say much, of seeing you again — keep well till you come, and if knowing that we all love you, makes you happier, then Austin, you may sing the whole day long!

Aff

Emilie.

We now expect to send your valise in a day or two, by Mr W<sup>m</sup> Cutler.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Tuesday noon. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Apr 12.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 111–112, in part; *L* (1931) 106–107, in part; *Home* 276–277, entire.

An attempt has been made throughout to erase the name "Sue." For a later reference to the aeolian harp, see letter no. 137.

116

To Austin Dickinson

16 April 1853

Dear Austin.

You make me happy, when you write so affectionately, happier than you know, and I always want to write to you as soon as your letters come, but it is not very often convenient that I can. Yet I will the morning after, as I do today. I am all alone, Austin. Father has gone to New York, Vinnie to Northampton, and mother is cutting out apples in the kitchen. I had forgotten Pussy, tho'; she's sitting on the mat, looking up in my face as if she wondered who I was writing to — if she knew it was "Master Austin" I guess she would send some

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word, for I know Pussy remembers you, and wonders where you are. Sometimes when she's more intelligent, I've half a mind to tell her how you have gone to Cambridge, and are studying the law, but I don't believe she'd understand me.

You can't think how delighted father was, with the account you gave of northerners and southerners, and the electioneering — he seemed to feel so happy to have you interested in what was going on at Cambridge — he said he "knew all about it — he'd been thro' the whole, it was only a little specimen of what you'd meet in life, if you lived to enter it." I couldn't hardly help telling him that I thought his idea of life rather a boisterous one, but I kept perfectly still.

I don't love to read your letters all out loud to father — it would be like opening the kitchen door when we get home from meeting Sunday, and are sitting down by the stove saying just what we're a mind to, and having father hear. I don't know why it is, but it gives me a dreadful feeling, and I skipped about the wild flowers, and one or two little things I loved the best, for I couldn't read *them* loud to anybody [*several words erased*]. I shan't see her this morning, because she has to *bake* Saturday, but she'll come this afternoon, and we shall read your letter together, and talk of how soon you'll be here [*seven lines erased*].

I shall think of you taking tea at Aunt Lavinia's tonight, and we shall take tea alone, how pleasant it would be to have you with us while father is away, but it isn't *May* yet. Thank you for remembering me when you found the wild flowers, and for wanting me to stay a week with you. These things are very kind, and I will not forget them. The birds sing beautifully, Pussy is trying to beat them. Don't work too hard Austin, don't get too tired, so that you cannot sleep, we always think of you. Love from us all.

Emilie.

John Thompson is in the office of Mr Vose, in Springfield.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Saturday noon. Envelope addressed by ED in ink: Wm Austin Dickinson/Law School./Cambridge./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Apr 16.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 111–112, in part; *Home* 278–279, entire, except for mutilated parts.

John Thompson, a college classmate of Austin's, later practiced law in Chicago.

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To John L. Graves

spring 1853

A little poem we will write unto our Cousin John,  
to tell him if he does not come and see us very soon,  
we will immediately forget there's any such a man,  
and when he comes to see us, we will not be "at home."

Emilie – Vinnie –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (G 8). Pencil. Dated: Thursday morn. Addressed on the fold: Cousin John. Unpublished.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Graves had made the harp for ED early in April (see letter no. 115). Perhaps this was written later in the month.

To Austin Dickinson

21 April 1853

Dear Austin.

We could hardly eat any supper last night, we felt so badly to think you had'nt got the valise, and we talked all the time about it while we sat at the table, and called Mr Cutler names – Father says he "would like to reach him just long enough to cuff his ears." We do feel so badly about it, we dont know what to do.

There were all your clothes in such beautiful order, and a cake of new maple sugar, and mother had with her own hand selected and polished the apples, she thought it would please you so. It is too bad – too bad. We do feel vexed about it. Mother thinks it is lost – she says you will never see it. Father thinks he would'nt *dare* to lose it, but is too selfish to trouble himself by sending you any word. Mother is so afraid that you will need the clothes, and wont know what to do without them, and Vinnie and I keep hoping, and trying to persuade her that you've got them before now.

We have all been thinking how much you'd enjoy the sugar, and how nice the apples would taste after studying all day long, and "living very sparingly," but this [is] a vexing world, and things "aft gang

aglay." I wont talk any more of this, for I know you are disappointed as much as any of us, and want to hear something sunnier – and there is something sunnier. I was with dear Susie last evening, and she told me how on Monday she walked out in the fields, carrying your letter with her, and read it over and over, "sitting on the stile," and pausing as she read, to look at the hills and the trees and the blue, blue home beyond.

Susie talked much of you, and of her lonely life when you were gone away, and we said you would soon be here, and then we talked of *how* soon, and of many and many a sunlight and many and many a shade which might steal upon us ere then. How I wish you were here, dear Austin, how I do wish for you so many times every day, and I miss the long talks most, upon the *kitchen stone hearth*, when the just are fast asleep. I ask myself many times if they will come back again, and whether they will stay, but we dont know.

Father wont go to Boston this week, as he had intended to, for he finds a great deal to do in starting the Newman family. I think now he will go *next week*, tho' I dont know what day. The Newmans all board at Mrs Merrill's until they get into their house, which will be by Saturday, certainly. Their Irish girl stays here, for Mrs Merrill was afraid she would not agree with *her* girl. The Newmans seem very pleasant, but they are not *like us*. What makes a few of us so different from others? It's a question I often ask myself. The Germanians gave a concert here, the evening of Exhibition day. Vinnie and I went with John. I never heard [such] *sounds* before. They seemed like *brazen Robins*, all wearing broadcloth wings, and I think they were, for they all flew away as soon as the concert was over. I tried so hard to make Susie go with us, but she would'nt consent to it. I could not bear to have her lose it.

Write me as soon as this comes, and say if you've got the valise.

Emilie

Anna Warner died Tuesday night, and will be buried tomorrow, I suppose. They seem to feel very badly. She has been sick a great while now. You will not be surprised at hearing it. Mother wants me to tell you *from her* to get all the clothes you need at some good place in Boston, should you not find the valise. I hope you have got it before now. I should'nt think he *would lose* it, after all you have done for him. Mother says she can never look upon him again.



MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Thursday noon. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms [?]

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 122, in part; *L* (1931) 120, in part; *Home* 280-281, entire.

Edward Dickinson enclosed a brief note saying that he must postpone his trip to Boston. The missing valise probably turned up, for it is not mentioned again. John Graves's invitation to the girls may have followed ED's reminder (no. 117) that he had not called recently. Anna Charlotte Warner was the eleven-year-old daughter of Professor Aaron Warner. On the Newmans, see letters no. 104 and 106.

The Germania orchestra, conducted by Carl Bergmann, came to the United States from Berlin in 1848. During the six years it lasted, the orchestra gave nine hundred concerts in all parts of the country, often in collaboration with local choral societies. The Spring Exhibition at Amherst College took place on April 19, and was concluded with a concert by the Germania Serenade Band.

119

To Henry V. Emmons

spring 1853

Mr Emmons—

Since receiving your beautiful writing I have often desired to thank you thro' a few of my flowers, and arranged the fairest for you a little while ago, but heard you were away—

I have very few today, and they compare but slightly with the immortal blossoms you kindly gathered me, but will you please accept them—the "Lily of the field" for the blossoms of Paradise, and if 'tis ever mine to gather those which fade not, from the garden we have not seen, you shall have a brighter one than I can find today.

Emilie E. Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 1). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 366-367.

Although the nature of Emmons's "beautiful writing" is not specified, it is possible he had lent ED a copy of his dissertation "Sympathy in Action," presented at the Spring Exhibition on April 19. The two notes to Emmons that follow this appear to form a sequence, and since there is no way to date them exactly, they have been placed here together.

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120

To Henry V. Emmons

spring 1853

Ungentle "Atropos"! And yet I dare not chide her, for fear those saucy fingers will ply the shears again.

Perhaps she suspects the *wine*! Please tell her it's only *Currant* Wine, and would she be so kind as to lend me her shears a little, that I might cut a thread?

Vinnie and I wait patiently the coming of our friends, and trust a brighter evening will soon reward us all for the long expectation.

Your friends,

Emilie & Vinnie Dickinson—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 6). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 370.

The friend included in the invitation is John Graves.

121

To Henry V. Emmons

spring 1853

Thank you, indeed, Mr Emmons, for your beautiful acknowledgment, far brighter than my flowers; and while with pleasure I *lend* you the little manuscript, I shall beg leave to claim it, when you again return. I trust you will find much happiness in an interview with your friend, and will be very happy to see you, when you return.

Emilie E. Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 2). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 367.

There is no clue to the nature of the manuscript which ED lent Emmons. Since the friendship of the two was based on a shared interest in literature, one may surmise that she loaned him a gathering of her own poems. For a probable identification of the "friend," see letter no. 136.

[ 247 ]

To Austin Dickinson

7 May 1853

Dear Austin.

A week ago, we were all here—today we are not all here—yet the bee hums just as merrily, and all the busy things work on as if the same. They do not miss you, Child, but there is a humming bee whose song is not so merry, and there are busy ones who pause to drop a tear. Let us thank God, today, Austin, that we can love our friends, our brothers and our sisters, and weep when they are gone, and smile at their return. It is indeed a joy which we are blest to know. Today is very beautiful—just as bright, just as blue, just as green and as white, and as crimson, as the cherry trees full in bloom, and the half opening peach blossoms, and the grass just waving, and sky and hill and cloud, can make it, if they try. How I wish you were here, Austin—you thought *last* Saturday beautiful—yet to this golden day, 'twas but one single gem, to whole handfuls of jewels. You will ride today, I hope, or take a long walk somewhere, and recollect us all, Vinnie and me, and Susie and Father and mother and home. Yes, Austin, every one of us, for we all think of you, and bring you to recollection many times each day—not *bring* you to recollection, for we never put you away, but keep recollecting on. Wasn't you very tired when you got back to Cambridge? I thought you would be, you had so much to do, the morning you went away. I hope you do not cough mornings, as you did when you were at home. If you do, go and see that Apothecary who gave you something before, and get something to cure it. And Austin, don't you care about anything else that troubles you—It isn't anything—It is too slight, too small, to make you worry so—don't think any more about it. We all love you very much—wont you remember *that* when anything worries you, and you wont care then.

I don't feel as if you'd been here—the time was so very short—how I wish today was last Saturday, and last Saturday was today, so we could see you. Shant you write us pretty soon? We have looked for a note before. Susie and I walked together all last Tuesday evening, talking of you and the visit, and wishing you were here, and would not go away again. I love her more and more. She looks very lovely in colors—she don't wear mourning now.

You must think of us tonight, while Mr Dwight takes tea here, and we will think of you far away, down in Cambridge. Don't mind the law, Austin, if it is rather dry, don't mind the daily road, tho' it is rather dusty, but remember the brooks and the hills, and remember while you're *but one*, we are *but four* at home!

Emilie.

You *must* come home in the recess.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Saturday noon. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked obliterated.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 123–124, in part; *L* (1931) 121–122, in part; *Home* 283–284, entire.

With ED's letter was enclosed one from Lavinia (*Home* 282–283). Austin had been home for a short visit, from April 29 until May 2. It seems probable that Austin's worry rose out of his fear that the family would object to his plan to have his hair cut short (see letters no. 126 and 132).

123

To Austin Dickinson

16 May 1853

"Strikes me" just so, dear Austin, but somehow I have to work a good deal more than I used to, and harder, and I feel so tired when night comes, that I'm afraid if I write you, 'twill be something rather bluer than you'll be glad to see—so I sew with all my might, and hope when work is done to be with you much oftener than I have lately been.

Somehow I am lonely lately—I feel very old every day, and when morning comes and the birds sing, they don't seem to make me so happy as they used to. I guess it's because you're gone, and there are not so many of us as God gave for each other. I wish you were at home. I feel very sure lately that the years we have had together are more than we shall have—I guess we shall journey separately, or reach the journey's end, some of us—but we don't know. We all love you very much. I don't believe you guess how much home thinks and says of it's only absent child—yes, Austin, home is faithful, none other is so true [*three lines erased*].

You mustn't mind what I say about feeling lonely lately. It isn't any matter, but I thought I would tell you, so you'd know why I didn't

write more. Vinnie and I thank you very much for your letters — we always thank you, and your letters are dearer than all the rest that come. Vinnie did the errand which you wanted her to, but the stage didn't come over from Northampton at noon, and she couldn't send till today. She sends her love to you, and will write to you very soon. Susie says her letter was safely delivered, and she seemed very grateful — she has not yet received your week before last letter — she thinks someone here has got it. Susie and I went to meeting last evening and Father went home first with Susie and then with me. I thought the folks would stare. I think Father feels that she appreciates him, better than most anybody else — How pleasant it is, isn't it?

She is a dear child to us all, and we see her every day.

We had a very pleasant visit from the Monson folks — they came one noon and stayed till the next. They agree beautifully with Father on the "present generation." They decided that they hoped every young man who smoked would take fire. I respectfully intimated that I thought the result would be a vast conflagration, but was instantly put down.

We are very glad Joel is better, and shall be glad to see him. Take good care of yourself, Austin — now the days grow warm, and don't study too hard. I want to have you tell me how soon you're coming home. You must think of nothing but coming!

Emilie.

While I write, the whistle is playing, and the cars just coming in. It gives us all new life, every time it plays. How you will love to hear it, when you come home again! How soon is the recess? We are anxious to know, and you must come home, *of course*. You must write us pretty soon, and tell us when you are coming — so we can anticipate it. Mr Dwight has finished preaching, and it now remains to be seen if the people ask him to stay. We are all charmed with him, and I'm sure he will have a call. I never heard a minister I loved half so well, so does Susie love him, and we all — I wish you were at meeting every time he preaches.

The term has commenced, and there were a great many students to hear him yesterday. We all send our love to you. Mother says she shall send your stockings by the first opportunity. Have you received the package sent by W<sup>m</sup> Kellogg? I have written so very fast, but I hope you can read what I write.

MANUSCRIPT: A.C. Pencil. Dated: Monday noon. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Boston May 17. An attempt has been made throughout to erase the name "Sue."

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 112-113, in part; *Home* 287-289, entire, except for mutilated parts.

The "Monson folks" presumably included Mrs. Dickinson's stepmother, Sarah Vaill Norcross. The first regular trip of a passenger train on the Amherst and Belchertown Railroad was made on May 9. On May 24 the First Church voted to invite the Reverend Edward S. Dwight to become their pastor. He accepted the call in August.

124

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

about June 1853

The Buds are small, dear Emily, but will you please accept one for your Cousin and yourself? I quite forgot the *Rosebugs* when I spoke of the buds, last evening, and I found a family of them taking an early breakfast on my most precious bud, with a smart little worm for Landlady, so the sweetest are gone, but accept my love with the smallest, and I'm

Lovingly,  
Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 133; *L* (1931) 133.

The cousin was Julia Jones of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

125

To Austin Dickinson

5 June 1853

Dear Austin.

It is Sunday, and I am here alone. The rest have gone to meeting, to hear Rev Martin Leland. I listened to him this forenoon in a state of mind very near frenzy, and feared the effect too much to go out this afternoon. The morning exercises were perfectly ridiculous, and we spent the intermission in mimicking the Preacher, and reciting extracts from his most memorable sermon. I never heard father so funny.



How I did wish you were here. I know you'd have died laughing. Father said he didn't dare look at Sue—he said he saw her bonnet coming round our way, and he looked “straight ahead”—he said he ran out of meeting for fear somebody would ask him what he tho't of the preaching. He says if anyone asks him, he shall put his hand to his mouth, and his mouth in the dust, and cry, Unclean—Unclean!! But I hav'nt time to say more of Martin Leland, but I wish you were here today, Austin, and could hear father talk, and you would laugh so loud they would hear you way down in Cambridge. Vinnie and I got your letters just about bedtime last evening. I had been at Sue's all the evening and communicated to her the fact that they had not come. She had felt all the time she said, perfectly sure that [*remainder of letter missing, Postscript on first page*]: All send love to you Austin—write us again very soon—I am glad for “The Honeysuckle.”

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Sunday afternoon. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jun 6. The letter has been torn in half, and an attempt has been made throughout to erase or alter the name “Sue.”

PUBLICATION: *Home* 292.

126

To Austin Dickinson

9 June 1853

Dear Austin.

I got your letter—I delivered the one to Sue. Jerry stood ready to act at moment's notice, and all was as you wished, but Sue thought not best, so I suppose you'll receive a telegraphic despatch, and Susie and I shall not see you this evening.

Your letter troubled me a good deal for a moment, I tho't something dreadful had happened; you were about to be killed and were coming to bid us Goodbye, or something of the kind, but I know the whole now.

Whenever you want help, Austin, just call on Jerry and me, and we will take care of you, and perhaps we'll *help a little*. I hope you wont trouble yourself about any remarks that are made—they are not worth the thought of—certainly not the care for. Dont mind them.

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Nobody'll dare to harm dear Susie, nobody'll dare to harm you. You are too far from them; dont fear them. I hope the hair is off—you must tell me about it as soon as you write again, and write us soon. We are pretty well now. I rode with Emmons last evening, and had a beautiful ride. New London is coming today, but I dont care, I dont think folks are much. I do wish you were here. Dear Austin, now remember not to care for these foolish things, for they cant reach Sue.

Love from us.

Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Thursday morning. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jun 9. An attempt has been made throughout to erase or alter the name “Sue.”

PUBLICATION: *Home* 293.

In celebration of the opening of the Amherst and Belchertown Railroad, an excursion was arranged at the joint invitation of the railroad and the New London, Willimantic and Palmer line, to bring the people of New London by special train to Amherst. Austin's worry seems to have to do with people's remarks about him and Sue. On his concern about his hair, see letters no. 122 and 132.

127

To Austin Dickinson

13 June 1853

My dear Austin.

I dont know where to begin. There has been considerable news since I have written much to you, and yet of such a kind as I dont think you would care for. I will tell you first how glad I am you are better, and are not going to be sick, as I was afraid when you wrote me. Do be careful, very careful, Austin, for you are from us all, and if anything happens to you, we cannot find it out and all take care of you as we can when you're at home. I dont think you'd better study any for a day or two, until you feel perfectly well. I wont say any more about it, if you dont want to have me, lest I make you sick by talking, as you said you should be if I told anybody, and folks wrote letters to you; but just come home the moment whenever you are sick,

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or think you are going to be sick, and you shall have Vinnie and me and Somebody nearer than either of us to take care of you, and make you well. I sent the White Hat as you wished, and you've probably received it before this. I sent it on Saturday, with special instructions to Driver, and presume it has got there safely.

I will send *the other* directly, if you would like to have me.

The New London Day passed off grandly — so all the people said — it was pretty hot and dusty, but nobody cared for that. Father was as usual, Chief Marshal of the day, and went marching around the town with New London at his heels like some old Roman General, upon a Triumph Day. Mrs Howe got a capital dinner, and was very much praised. Carriages flew like sparks, hither, and thither and yon, and they all said 't'was fine. I spose it was — I sat in Prof Tyler's woods and saw the train move off, and then ran home again for fear somebody would see me, or ask me how I did. Dr Holland was here and called to see us — seemed very pleasant indeed, inquired for you, and asked mother if Vinnie and I might come and see them in Springfield.

Last week was beautiful, tho' very warm and dry. I was very happy last week, for we were at Susie's house, or Susie was at our house most all the time, and she always makes us happy. Vinnie is down there now.

The stories are all still, Austin. I dont hear any now, and Susie says she dont care now the least at all for them. They must not trouble you — they are very low — of the earth — they cannot reach our heaven if they climb never so high. I will attend to Bowdoin.

Mr Ford sat with us in church yesterday, and took tea at our house last night. I think he's a popinjay.

We had a visit from Joel. Ego, mitie, me. We all go down to the grove often. Father and mother together walked down there yesterday morning. I think they will all live. Father thinks so. We all send you our love.

Emilie.

I have had a letter from Mat, and she sent her love to you, and will write you very soon.

I will find out accurately what "the expenses" are, and let you know next time. We did the best we c'd, and everything very safely.

I gave Jerry your messages, at which his teeth increased, and his

countenance expanded — he laughed also for some time, as if taking the joke moderately and wasting none of it.

Austin — there's nothing in the world that Jerry wont do for you. I believe he thinks you are finer than anybody else, and feels quite consequential to think of serving you. Send him a word sometimes, for it affects him so. Mrs Mack too inquires for you with unabating interest. It's pleasant to be liked by such folks, and I love to hear them speak of you with interest. Mr Dwight has not given an answer. I feel a good deal afraid, but try to hope for the best. 'Twill be dreadful if we dont get him. You dont tell us about your hair — wont you next time, Austin, for your peace is our's. Write us often, and we will, and think that if we all live we shall again meet together during these summer days. I shall be glad to see the Poems.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Monday morning. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jun 14. An attempt has been made throughout to erase all passages mentioning the name of Sue.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 116, in part; L (1931) 114-115, in part; *Home* 295-296, entire.

The Reverend E. S. Dwight did in fact accept the call to the First Church later in the summer (see letter no. 123). On Jerry Holden, see letter no. 108. In ED's previous letter to Austin she indicates that he anticipated family opposition were he to have his hair cut short, as he seemed to wish. He finally concluded to have it done (see letter no. 132).

The greater part of the letter gives details on the New London influx. A morning train brought 325 people, on the ninth. They were provided a dinner at noon at the Amherst House, of which Mrs. Albin P. Howe was the landlady, and welcomed by Edward Dickinson.

For the allusion to Poems, in the last sentence, see the following letter.

To Austin Dickinson

19 June 1853

Do you want to hear from me, Austin? I'm going to write to you altho' it dont seem much as if you would care to have me. I dont know why exactly, but things look blue, today, and I hardly know what to

do, everything looks so strangely, but if you want to hear from me, I shall love very much to write—Prof Tyler has preached today, and I have been all day—Susie walked home from meeting with us, and was so disappointed at having no letter from you—It really seems very unsafe to depend upon Judge Conkey, and that Mr Eaton too, I should think quite hazardous—Dont wait for them next time. We received your notes and the Poems, for which we thank you, last week—Father seemed much pleased with his letter, and all of us laughed a little—The remark concerning Mr Ford seemed to please father mightily—I dont dont [*sic*] mean what I said, but your opposition to me—He told me you'd "hit me off nicely." You make me think of Dickens, when you write such letters as that—I am going to read it to Sue—I should have done before, but the afternoon it came, we had terrible thunder showers, and it rained all evening long, and yesterday afternoon Father wanted us all to ride, so I have not had opportunity—I walked with her last evening—She wore her new things today, and looked beautifully in them—a white straw hat, trimmed with Rouches—mantilla of fawn colored silk, very handsomely finished, and white Dress. She is going after Miss Bartlett tomorrow morning at 5—and begins her Dressmaking tomorrow—

She says she shall just get thro' by the time you get home—

So shall Vinnie and I—there must be no sewing then—We are all pretty well, and the weather is beautiful—If you were here I think you would be very happy, and I think we should, but time has wings, and you will be with us soon. We have been free from company by the "Amherst and Belchertown Railroad" since Joel went home, tho' we live in constant fear of some other visitation—

"Oh would some power the giftie gie" folks, to see themselves as we see them. Burns. I have read the poems, Austin, and am going to read them again, and will hand them to Susie—They please me very much, but I must read them again before I know just [what] I think of "Alexander Smith"—They are not very coherent, but there's good deal of exquisite frensy, and some wonderful figures, as ever I met in my life—We will talk about it again—The grove looks nicely, Austin, and we think must certainly grow—We love to go there—it is a charming place. Everything is singing now, and everything is beautiful that *can* be in it's life.

So Joel did'nt have a remarkable trip up here—wonder which en-

joyed it the most—the pestilence, or the victims—Dont tell him what I said—And think besides Aunt Lavinia must be very busy—Guess "Father will be tired" when they next visit here.

Jerry gets along nicely, takes first-rate care of the horse, and seems unusually grand after having a message from you. It has the same effect as a big mug of cider, and *looks* a good deal better. I am glad your eye has got well. You must use it carefully, for a little while—I hope you received your hat—I had not time to write you with it, for I did it up late at night, after having folks here all the evening, and I hope it did not seem strange to you—

The time for the New London trip has not been fixed upon—

I sincerely wish it may wait until you get home from Cambridge, if you would like to go—

The cars continue thriving—a good many passengers seem to arrive from somewhere, tho' nobody knows from where—Father expects his new Buggy to come by the cars, every day now, and that will help a little—I expect all our Grandfathers and all their country cousins will come here to pass Commencement, and dont doubt the stock will rise several percent that week. If we children and Sue could obtain board for the week in some "vast wilderness," I think we should have good times. Our house is crowded daily with the members of this world, the high and the low, the bond and the free, the "poor in this world's goods," and the "almighty dollar,["] and "what in the world are they after" continues to be unknown—But I hope they will pass away, as insects on vegetation, and let us reap together in golden harvest time—that is you and Susie and me and our dear sister Vinnie must have a pleasant time to be unmolested together, when your school days end. You must not stay with Howland after the studies cease—We shall be ready for you, and you must come home from school, not stopping to play by the way! Mother was much amused at the feebleness of your hopes of hearing from her—She got so far last week once, as to take a pen and paper and carry them into the kitchen, but her meditations were broken by the unexpected arrival of Col Smith and his wife, so she must try again—I'm sure you will hear from her soon. We all send our love to you, and miss you very much, and think of seeing you again very much, and love dear Sue constantly. Write me again soon. I have said a good deal today.

Emilie.



MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Sunday afternoon. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jun 20.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 114-115, in part; *L* (1931) 113-114, in part; *Home* 298-300, entire.

After the visit of the New London citizens, it was proposed that the Amherst people should take a similar excursion to New London.

Austin's last letter had evidently asked whether Emily would care to read the poems of the young Scottish poet Alexander Smith (1830-1867). She said that she would (letter no. 127), and the copy he sent of Smith's *A Life Drama and Other Poems* (1853) is in the Dickinson collection (HC).

129

To Austin Dickinson

26 June 1853

I shall write you a little, Austin, to send by Father tomorrow, tho' you havnt yet answered my long letter which went to you last Monday, and I've been looking for something from you for a good many days. The valise didn't get to us till a long time after you sent it, and so 'twas a good while Austin, before you heard from us, but you know all about it now, and I hope you dont care. But we felt so sorry to disappoint you by not sending the things which you requested to have us. Sue didn't hear yesterday, so we are all in a tantrum to know the meaning of that.

If you ever get where we are again, we shall tell you how many letters are missing by the way, and never reach you, and we shall ask you too how many have gone to us, which we have not received.

It is cold here today, Austin, and the west wind blows — the windows are shut at home, and the fire burns in the kitchen. How we should love to see you, how pleasant it would be to walk to the grove together. We will walk there, when you get home. We all went down this morning, and the trees look beautifully. Every one is growing, and when the west wind blows, the pines lift their light leaves and make sweet music. Pussy goes down there too, and seems to enjoy much in her own observations. Mr Dwight has not answered yet — he probably will this week. I do think he will come Austin, and shall be so glad if he will.

Did Susie write you how Vinnie went to South Hadley with Bow-

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doin, and she came to stay with me? And how we sewed together, and talked of what would be? We did sew and talk together, and she said she should tell you what a sweet time we had. Emmons asked me to ride yesterday afternoon, but I'd promised to go somewhere else, so he asked me to go this week, and I told him I would. Has father written you that Edwin Pierce, our neighbor, was arrested last week, for beating a servant girl, tried, and fined two dollars and costs? Vinnie and I heard the whipping, and could have testified, if the Court had called upon us. Also Dea Cowan's son George was detected while breaking into the Bonnet Shop, the other night, and is to be tried next Wednesday. Mr Frank Conkey is absent, and the criminal desiring his services, the parties consent to wait.

What do you think of Amherst? Dont you think your native place shows evident marks of progress? Austin — home looks beautifully — we all wish you here always, but I hope 'twill seem only dearer for missing it so long. Father says you will come in three weeks — that wont be long now. Keep well and happy, Austin, and remember us all you can, and much love from home

and Emilie.

Austin — are you willing to get me another bottle of medicine, if it wont trouble you too much, and send it to me by father? I enclose the prescription. You can get it at Mr Burnett's, but dont get it, Austin, unless it's convenient for you.

Mr and Mrs Godfrey have moved into the Baker house, across the road, and we're so glad to get them back again.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Sunday afternoon. An attempt has been made to erase the name "Sue."

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 117-118, in part; *L* (1931) 116, in part; *Home* 300-302, entire.

George Godfrey's wife was a seamstress who ran a boarding house.

130

To Austin Dickinson

1 July 1853

Dear Austin —

I'm sorrier than you are, when I cant write to you — I've tried with all my might to find a moment for you, but time has been so short,

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and my hands so full that until now I could not. Perhaps you do not know that Grandmother has been making a visit this week, and has just gone this noon—She has, and we are tired, and the day very warm, but write to you I will, before a *greater* happens.

Some of the letters you've sent us we have received, and thank you for affectionately—Some, we have not received, but thank you for the memory, of which the emblem perished. Where all those letters go—our's and your's, and Susie's, somebody surely knows, but we do not.

The note which came to Susie in the last evening's letter, was given her—She does not get the letters you say you send to her, and she sends others which you do not receive. Austin, if we four meet again we'll see what this all means. I tell Susie you write to her, and she says she "*knows* so" notwithstanding they do not often come—There's a new Postmaster today, but we don't know who's to blame. You never wrote me a letter, Austin, which I liked half so well as the one Father brought me, and you needn't fear that we don't always love you, for we always do—We think of your coming home with a great deal of happiness, and are glad you want to come—

Father said he never saw you looking in better health, or seeming in finer spirits. He didn't say a word about the Hippodrome or the museum, and he came home so stern that none of us dared to ask him, and besides Grandmother was here, and you certainly don't think I'd allude to a *Hippodrome* in the presence of that lady! I'd as soon think of popping fire crackers in the presence of Peter the Great! But you'll tell us when you get home—how soon—how soon! [*several words erased.*]

We are glad you're so well, Austin. We're glad you are happy too, and how often Vinnie and I wonder concerning something of which you never speak. We are pretty well, but tired, the weather too so warm that it takes the strength away. I am glad you are glad that I went to ride with Emmons. I went again with him one evening while father was gone, and had a beautiful ride.

I thank you for what you sent me, and for your kindness in saying what you did. I sent your little brush. I admire the Poems very much. We all send our love to you—shall write you again, Sunday.

Emilie—

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Friday afternoon. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jul 2.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 116–117, in part; *L* (1931) 115–116, in part; *Home* 303–304, entire.

The grandmother visiting the Dickinsons was Sarah Vaill Norcross, Mrs. Dickinson's stepmother. The comment on lost letters implies criticism of Seth Nims, the postmaster (see letter no. 16). The poems that ED admires are those of Alexander Smith (see letter no. 128).

To Austin Dickinson

8 July 1853

Dear Austin—

I must write you a little before the cars leave this noon—just to tell you that we got your letter last evening, and were rejoiced to hear from you after so long a time, and that we want to see you, and long to have you come, much more than I can tell you—

We didn't know what to make of it that we didn't hear from you, but owed it to the post masters on the way, and not to you, but now we know you've had company, you are rather more excusable—

Susie was here last night, saying she'd had a letter, and that we should have one at home before bedtime, which we did about 10–o'clock, when father came home from the office. Now Austin—we haven't written you oftener, because we've had so much company, and so many things to do. We want to get all our work done before you come home, so as not to be busy sewing when we want to see you; that's why we don't write oftener. You don't know how much we think of you, or how much we say, or how wish you were here every hour in the day, but we have to work very hard, and cannot write half as often as we want to to you. We think you don't write to us any, and we must all be patient until you get home, and then I rather think we shall wipe out old scores in a great many good talks. You say it is hot and dry. It is very dry here, tho' now for two or three days the air is fine and cool—Everything is so beautiful, it's a real Eden here; how happy we shall be roaming round it together! The trees are getting over the effect of the Canker worm, and we hope we may have some apples yet, tho' we can't tell now—but we feel very thankful that the

leaves are not all gone, and there's a few green things which hav'nt been carried away—Mother expects to go to Monson tomorrow afternoon, to spend the Sabbath—They want very much to have her, and we think she had better go—She will come home Monday afternoon—

Vinnie will write what she thinks about Mary Nichols' coming in her next. What would please you about it? I want you should all do what will make you the happiest—after that I dont care.

I am glad you have enjoyed seeing Gould—About something for Mother—I think it would please her very much if you should bring her something, tho' she would'nt wish you to get anything very expensive—

Vinnie and I will think of something and write you *what* next time—I hope to send father's Daguerreotype before you come, and will if I can get any safe opportunity. We shall write you again in a day or two, and all send our love—

Your aff sister

Emilie—

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Friday noon. The envelope, not franked, is addressed by ED: Wm Austin Dickinson./Law School./Cambridge./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jul 9.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 305–306.

Mary Nichols was a Boston friend of Austin's. The daguerreotype of Edward Dickinson is not now known to be in existence.

132

To Austin Dickinson

10 July 1853

[*first page missing*]

. . . are so glad it's off, and you are you at last. I will not tell the folks, if you dont want to have me. Dr Holland and his wife, spent last Friday with us—came unexpectedly—we had a charming time, and have promised to visit them after Commencement. They asked all about you, and Dr Holland's wife expressed a great desire to see you—He said you would be a Judge—there was no help for it—you must certainly be a Judge! We had Champagne for dinner, and a very fine time—We were so sorry you were not here, and Dr and Mrs Holland

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expressed their regret many times—Mother's coming home Monday—It seems very queer indeed to have her gone over Sunday, but we get along very well. It rained beautifully Saturday.

Susie is here or we there, pretty much all of the time now—We walked home from church together, and she said she was going to write you today—Mrs Cutler is going to Hardwick next week for a visit, and Sue is going to keep house—Perhaps you will go and see her, in case you should be in town! I cannot realize that you will come so soon, but I'm so glad, and we all are—Never mind the hair, Austin, we are glad, and that's all we care, and all Susie cares is, that you should *suspect* she should care—Love till you come—

Emilie—

As you are coming home Austin, and it's a good opportunity, I think I had better have another bottle of medicine, tho' I hav'nt used up the other yet—But dont you get it for me if you are very busy, or have other errands to do which will take all your time. You can do nothing for me, for which I thank you so much.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jul 11. With the letter is one enclosed from Lavinia (*Home* 308). The paragraph following the signature is on a separate sheet addressed on the verso: Austin.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 31–32, in part; *Home* 308–309, entire.

The first sentence, from which the beginning has been torn away, refers to Austin's hair (see letters no. 122 and 126). Austin came home on July 14 for a six-weeks vacation. The unexpected visit from Dr. Holland and his wife marks the beginning of the friendship between ED and Mrs. Holland, who met for the first time on this occasion. Holland's connection with the *Springfield Republican* brought him often to Amherst.

133

To Dr. and Mrs. J. G. Holland

autumn 1853

Dear Dr. and Mrs Holland—dear Minnie—it is cold tonight, but the thought of you so warm, that I sit by it as a fireside, and am never cold any more. I love to write to you—it gives my heart a holiday and sets the bells to ringing. If prayers had any answers to them, you were all here to-night, but I seek and I don't find, and knock and it is not

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opened. Wonder if God is just—presume he is, however, and t'was only a blunder of Matthew's.

I think mine is the case, where when they ask an egg, they get a scorpion, for I keep wishing for you, keep shutting up my eyes and looking toward the sky, asking with all my might for you, and yet you do not come. I wrote to you last week, but thought you would laugh at me, and call me sentimental, so I kept my lofty letter for "Adolphus Hawkins, Esq."

If it wasn't for broad daylight, and cooking-stoves, and roosters, I'm afraid you would have occasion to smile at my letters often, but so sure as "this mortal" essays immortality, a crow from a neighboring farm-yard dissipates the illusion, and I am here again.

And what I mean is this—that I thought of you all last week, until the world grew rounder than it sometimes is, and I broke several dishes.

Monday, I solemnly resolved I would be *sensible*, so I wore thick shoes, and thought of Dr Humphrey, and the Moral Law. One glimpse of *The Republican* makes me break things again—I read in it every night.

Who writes those funny accidents, where railroads meet each other unexpectedly, and gentlemen in factories get their heads cut off quite informally? The author, too, relates them in such a sprightly way, that they are quite attractive. Vinnie was disappointed to-night, that there were not more accidents—I read the news aloud, while Vinnie was sewing. *The Republican* seems to us like a letter from you, and we break the seal and read it eagerly. . . .

Vinnie and I talked of you as we sewed, this afternoon. I said—"how far they seem from us," but Vinnie answered me "only a little way" . . . I'd love to be a bird or bee, that whether hum or sing, still might be near you.

Heaven is large—is it not? Life is short too, isn't it? Then when one is done, is there not another, and—and—then if God is willing, we are neighbors then. Vinnie and mother send their love. Mine too is here. My letter as a bee, goes laden. Please love us and remember us. Please write us very soon, and tell us how you are. . . .

Affy,  
Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is from *Letters* (1894), which reproduces in facsimile the first paragraph (showing the letter to be dated: Tuesday Evening), and the signature: Affy, Emilie.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 157-158; LL 185-186; L (1931) 156-157; LH 32-34.

Emily and Vinnie visited the Hollands in September, pursuant to plans made in July. Mrs. Holland's sister Amelia (Minnie) Chapin lived with the Hollands until her marriage in 1856. Dr. Heman Humphrey, president of Amherst College from 1823 until 1845, had taught moral philosophy. Adolphus Hawkins, in Longfellow's prose romance *Kavanagh*, is a character whose writings satirize the effusions of the village poet. The scripture paraphrase in the first paragraph is from Matthew 7. 7-8; that in the second, from Luke 11. 12: "Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?"; that in the third, from I Corinthians 15. 53.

134

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

October 1853

Dear Susie—

I send you a little air—The "Music of the Spheres." They are represented above as passing thro' the sky.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 75). Pencil. Addressed: Susie. ED made a sketch of ascending musical notations and puffs of ascending clouds.

PUBLICATION: FF 185.

Sue was visiting in New York at this time.

135

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

about October 1853

It's hard to wait, dear Susie, though my heart is there, and has been since the sunset, and I knew you'd come—I'd should have gone right down, but Mother had been at work hard, as it was Saturday, and Austin had promised to take her to Mrs Cobb's, as soon as he got home from Palmer—then she wanted to go, and see two or three of the neighbors, and I wanted to go to you, but I thought it would be unkind—so not till tomorrow, Darling—and all the stories Monday—

except short sketches of them at meeting tomorrow night. *I* have stories to tell—very unusual for me—a good many things have happened—Love for you Darling—How can I sleep tonight?

Ever Emilie—

So precious, my own Sister, to have you here again—*Somebody* loves you more—or I were there this evening—

Mother sends her love—She spoke of it this morning, what a day Susie would have—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 152). Pencil. Dated: 6 o'clock. Addressed: Susie.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 220, in part.

Probably this note welcomes Sue home from her New York trip.

136

To Henry V. Emmons

autumn 1853

I send you the book with pleasure, for it has given me happiness, and I love to have it busy, imparting delight to others.

Thank you for the beautiful note—It is too full of poesy for a Saturday morning's reply, but I will not forget it, nor shall it fade as the leaves, tho' like them gold and crimson—

I send a note for your friend—Please remember me to her, with a sincere affection—

I am happy that she is with you—I have not read the book of which you speak—I will be happy to whenever agreeable [*sic*] to you—and please give me an opportunity to see you "sirrah" very soon—

Your friend

Emily E. Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 3). Pencil. Dated: Saturday morn.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 368.

The friend here mentioned is not Susan Phelps, to whom Emmons became engaged in the following year (see letters no. 168 and 169). ED had not yet met her. The person referred to is probably Eliza Judkins, formerly a teacher at Amherst Academy (see letter no. 163).

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137

To John L. Graves

late 1853

In memory of Æolus.

Cousin John—

I made these little Wristlets. Please wear them for me. Perhaps they will keep you warm.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (G 6). Pencil. Addressed on the fold: Mr John L. Graves/Present. Unpublished.

At the top ED sketched a grave, with head and foot stones. The wristlets were sent as a gift in return for the aeolian harp which Graves had made and presented ED in April (see letter no. 115). They were gaily striped and survived for many years, "shown to his children long ago, as Emily's handiwork" (letter from Miss Louise B. Graves, 12 August 1951, to the editor).

138

To Henry V. Emmons

late 1853

Friend—

Which of us is mistaken?

E. E. D.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 8). Pencil. Dated Tuesday noon.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 371.

ED's friendship with Emmons stemmed from their interest in books. This note may have something to do with reading.

139

To Austin Dickinson

8 November 1853

Dear Austin—

It seems very lonely without you. Just as I write it snows, and we shall have a storm. It makes me think of Thanksgiving, when we are

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all here again. Sue was with us yesterday afternoon, and as usual walked up to Miss Baker's with Vinnie –

I got my plants in yesterday, and it was so cold last night that the squashes all had to be moved.

We shall move the table into the sitting room today, and with a cheerful fire, and only one thing wanting, you can think just how we look. I guess things at the house are getting along pretty well, tho' father said this morning he almost wished he'd persuaded you to stay until after Thanksgiving. Father went away, bidding us an affectionate good bye yesterday morning, having business in Springfield which would detain him all day, and perhaps until the next day, and returned at dinner time, just as the family were getting *rather busy* – Of course, we were delighted to be together again! After our long separation! Had a letter from Mat, last night, which I would enclose to you, but have just sent it to Sue. She spoke of you very affectionately, sent her love, and wanted you to write her. She enclosed a private letter to Sue. I hope you have got there safely, and found a pleasant home. It looks so bleak this morning that if you were me, at all, you might be inclined to be homesick; as you are not, I hope you're not.

I must not write any more, for there isn't a moment to spare before this goes in the mail.

I'm afraid you can't read it now, I have written in such a hurry – We all send you our love, and hope you are happy, and think much of seeing you again.

Affy,  
Emily.

PS. Pussy is well –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Tuesday morning. Envelope addressed and franked by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Nov 8.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 311.

Austin remained at home until after the Cattle Show, October 26, returning to law school some days after the fall term began. "Mat" is Martha Gilbert.

To Austin Dickinson

10 November 1853

Dear Austin –

I was so glad to get your letter, and thank you for writing so soon. It does seem so strange without you, but we try to make the most of us, and get along pretty well.

The weather is very cold here. Day before yesterday, we had a snow storm – yesterday a terrible rain, and today the wind blows west, and the air is bitter cold. I am so glad you got there pleasantly, and feel so much at home. Mr Dwight preached beautifully Sunday, and I knew you w'd miss him.

Mrs Fay is moving today, and Father is so solemn –

I do wish he would "look more cheerful" – I think the Artist was right –

Sue was here day before yesterday, but it stormed and blew so yesterday, no one could get out, and therefore we did not see her.

Father remarked yesterday that he would like it very well if you were here to vote. For all you differ, Austin – he can't get along without you, and he's been just as bleak as a November day, ever since you've been gone. You asked me about the railroad – Everybody seems pleased at the change in arrangement. It sounds so pleasantly to hear them come in twice. I hope there will be a bell soon. We were talking about it this morning. Write very often, Austin. You are coming next week Saturday, you know, and the Roosters are ripening!

The family party is to be at "Miss Willim's"!

Good bye.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Thursday morn. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Nov 10. An attempt has been made to alter the reference to Sue.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 311–312.

Mrs. Samuel A. Fay, an aunt of the Newman girls, kept house for them when they moved to Amherst (see letter no. 106). Enclosed with this letter was one from Lavinia (*Home* 312–313).



To Austin Dickinson

14 November 1853

Dear Austin.

You didn't come, and we were all disappointed, tho' none so much as father, for nobody but father really believed you would come, and yet folks are disappointed sometimes, when they don't expect anything. Mother got a great dinner yesterday, thinking in her kind heart that you would be so hungry after your *long ride*, and the table was set for you, and nobody moved your chair, but there it stood at the table, until dinner was all done, a melancholy emblem of the blasted hopes of the world. And we had new custard pie, too, which is a rarity in days when hens don't lay, but mother knew you loved it, and when noon really got here, and you really did not come, then a big piece was saved in case you should come at night. Father seemed perfectly sober, when the afternoon train came in, and there was no intelligence of you in any way, but "there's a good time coming"! I suppose Father wrote you yesterday that Frank Conkey was chosen Representative. I don't know whether you will care, but I felt all the while that if you had been here, it w'd not have been so.

I wonder if you voted in Cambridge, I didn't believe you would come. I said so all the while, and tho' I was disappointed, yet I couldn't help smiling a little, to think that I guessed right. I told Father I *knew* you w'd vote somehow in Cambridge, for you always did what you wanted to, whether 'twas against the law or not, but he wouldn't believe me, so when he was mistaken, I *was* a little gratified. Sue "spent the afternoon, and took tea" at Dea [John] Leland's yesterday. I was with her last evening, and she came half way home with me. She didn't think you would come. George Allen remarked at their table yesterday, that for his part, he hoped Frank Conkey would be chosen representative, for he was a very smart fellow, and the finest Lawyer in Amherst — also that he was said to present his cases in court much finer than any other, and should *he himself* George Allen, have any difficult business, he should surely entrust it to him!

If that isn't the apex of human impudence, I don't know anything of it. She remarked in her coolest, most unparalled way, that she wanted to open the door, and poke him out with the poker!

So much for the Amherst youth! I should recommend a closet, and self examination, accompanied with bread and water, to that same individual, till he might obtain faint glimpses of something like common sense. If Joseph Addison were alive, I should present him to him, as the highest degree of absurdity, which I had yet discerned, as it is, I will let him alone in the undisturbed possession of his remarkable folly.

Mr James Kellogg's brother from New York, with a family of nine, are here for a little while, and board at the Amherst House. Quite an affair to the town, and to the Landlord's purse. I'm telling all the news, Austin, for I think you will like to hear it. You know it's quite a sacrifice for *me* to tell what's going on.

We want to see you, all of us — we shall be very happy when you come. I hope you'll get home on Saturday. Prof Park will preach in Amherst next Sunday. I know you will want to hear him.

I send my prescription, Austin, and would be glad to have you attend to it for me, if you have time, but if it is inconvenient, no matter now. Mother sends much love — father is gone away. Vinnie has written herself, and I am today and always,

your aff  
Sister Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Monday morning. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmark obliterated.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 313-314.

James Kellogg, a prominent Amherst manufacturer, was the father of ED's friend Emeline Kellogg. The Reverend Edwards Amasa Park, a professor at Andover Theological Seminary, was one of the distinguished preachers of his day. Offered the presidency of Amherst in 1844, he declined it. With this letter, as with the preceding, was enclosed one from Lavinia (*Home* 315).

To Austin Dickinson

21 November 1853

Dear Austin.

I should have written you long ago, but I tho't you would certainly come Saturday, and if I sent a letter, it w'd not get to you. I was so

glad to get your letter. I had been making calls all Saturday afternoon, and came home very tired, and a little disconsolate, so your letter was more than welcome.

I felt so sorry I did not write again, when I found you were not coming home, and w'd look for a line on Friday, but you must'nt feel disappointed, Thanksgiving will come so soon.

Oh Austin, you dont know how we all wished for you yesterday. We had such a splendid sermon from that Prof Park—I never heard anything like it, and dont expect to again, till we stand at the great white throne, and "he reads from the book, the Lamb's book." The students and chapel people all came, to our church, and it was very full, and still—so still, the buzzing of a fly would have boomed like a cannon. And when it was all over, and that wonderful man sat down, people stared at each other, and looked as wan and wild, as if they had seen a spirit, and wondered they had not died. How I wish you had heard him. I thought of it all the time, and so did Sue and Vinnie, and father and mother spoke of it as soon as we got home. But—it is over. Sawyer spent last evening here, but I was at meeting, and had only an opportunity to bid him Good night as I came in.

I suppose that Thanksgiving party is to take place as surely as any stated Fast, and it is quite as cheerful, as those occasions to me. It will have to happen this year, but *we* wont go again. I know it is too bad, but we will make the best of it, and from this time henceforth, we'll have no more to do with it.

No Austin—you're very kind, but there is nothing more we shall want you to do for us than we have spoken of. I wish you might come sooner, but come just as soon as you can—

Susie is all worn out sewing. She seems very lonely without you, and I think seems more depressed than is usual for her. I am so glad you are coming. I think a great many things need you. I will write no more—We shall soon see you, and can say all we please—Remember us to Mr Clark cordially—Take care of yourself, and get here early Wednesday.

Affy  
Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Monday morning. Envelope franked by Edward Dickinson but addressed by ED: William Austin Dickinson/

Law School/Cambridge/Mass. Postmark obliterated. An attempt has been made to erase and alter the name "Sue."

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 102, in part; L (1931) 99, in part; *Home* 316–317, entire.

Stephen Greely Clarke, of Manchester, New Hampshire, was a friend of Austin's at Harvard Law School. On Professor Park, see the note in the preceding letter. With this letter, as with the two preceding, was enclosed one from Lavinia (*Home* 317–319).

143

To Emily Fowler (Ford)

23 November 1853?

Dear Emily—

I think of you a great deal, tho' I have not been to see you, and my heart runs in every day to see if it cannot comfort you.

I was coming Saturday Evening, but heard you had company. I do hope after Thanksgiving that I can come and see you a great many times and stay a long while, and I hope you will do so here. I have only a little space left to wish you a sweet Thanksgiving.

Aff  
Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: YUL. Pencil. Unpublished. Dated: Wednesday noon. Addressed: Emilie.

If the letter was written in 1853, as the handwriting suggests, it was probably written on November 23. Thanksgiving was the following day.

144

To Austin Dickinson

13 December 1853

It's quite a comfort, Austin, to hear that you're *alive*, after being for several days in ignorance of the fact—and when I tell you honestly that Vinnie and George Howland would have gone to Northampton yesterday to *telegraph* to you, if we had'nt heard yesterday noon, you can judge that we felt some alarm.

We supposed you had either been *killed*, in going from Cambridge to Boston, for the sake of your watch, or had been very sick and were

at present *delirious* and therefore could not write. Mother and Vinnie, Sue and me, were about as disconsolate last Saturday night at sundown, as you would often see. Sue spent the evening here and I went home with her, each feeling perfectly sure that you were not in this world, neither in that to come, and worrying ourselves to fevers in wondering where you were, and why you didn't write something to some of us. Oh how you would have laughed to have seen us flying around — dodging into the post office and insisting upon it we had a letter there, notwithstanding poor Mr Nims declared there was nothing there — then chasing one another down to our office to Bowdoin, and telling him we knew all about it — he had got the letter and was hiding it, and when he took oath he had not, plunging into the street again, and then back to the house to communicate the result of our forlorn proceedings — and mother — oh she thought the bears in the wood had devoured you, or if you were not eaten up, you were such a monster of thoughtlessness and neglect! but it's all over now, and Thank God you are safe! We are all here, dear Austin — still getting cheerfully on — still missing you, and wishing for you, and knowing you cannot come — Oh for the pleasant years when we were young together, and this was *home — home!*

Poor Susie hears nothing from you — She knows you have written tho'. Sue and I walked to Plainville to meeting Sunday night, and walked back again — Mr Dwight was there — I presume it will make you laugh. Mother could'nt find that Collar Pattern, but you left a Collar in the kitchen cupboard, which you said was just right, and I've ripped it, and cut a pattern from that, and the next time you write if you'll tell me if it's the correct one, Vinnie'll take it up to Miss Baker. We hear from Father often — in better spirits now — When are you coming home. We do want to see you — Much love for you. Write soon —

Your aff Sister,  
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Tuesday morning. Envelope franked by Edward Dickinson but addressed by Lavinia, who enclosed with this a letter of her own (*Home* 329). Postmarked: Amherst Ms Dec 13.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 328–329.

Plainville was a settlement west of Amherst. Congress convened on December 5, and Edward Dickinson had been in Washington since the first of the month. This letter is written on embossed stationery showing the Capitol, and on the fourth page ED drew a chimney with escaping smoke, and approaching the door a striding Indian whose feathered head-dress is labeled "Member from the 10th."

To Austin Dickinson

20 December 1853

Well Austin — dear Austin — you have got back again, Codfish and Pork and all — *all* but the *slippers*, so nicely wrapped to take, yet found when you were gone, under the kitchen chair. I hope you wont want them — Perhaps you have some more there — I will send them by opportunity — should there be such a thing. Vinnie proposed *franking* them, but I fear they are rather large! What should you think of it. It is'nt *every* day that we have a chance to sponge Congress — I wish Vinnie could go as a member — She'd save something snug for us all, besides enriching herself, but Caesar is such "an honorable man" that we may all go to the Poor House, for all the American Congress will lift a finger to help us —

Sue went round collecting for the charitable societies today, and calling on *Miss Kingsbury* in the exercise of that function, the gentle miss remarked that she "would'nt give a cent, nobody gave *her* anything, and she would'nt give them anything," i.e. nobody — she "had to do all the work,[""] besides taking care of "*her*" referring Sue supposed to the proprietor of a huge ruffled night cap, protruding from a bed in their spacious apartment. Sue said the gate went "shang, wang, wang" as she passed out of it.

The usual rush of callers, and this beleaguered family as yet in want of time — I do hope immortality will last a little while, but if the Adams' should happen to get there first, we shall be driven there. Vinnie has the headache today. She intends to increase the friction, and see what that will do! She dont believe a word of the man without any action — thinks it is one of your hoaxes — Vinnie went down yesterday to see about the Horse, and found everything right.



We heard from Father last night and again tonight. He is coming home on Thursday. He alludes to you several times.

We were real glad to get your note, and to know that all was well. Sue shall have hers early tomorrow morning—Will that be soon enough? She has been here this afternoon. She is going to send the letters you spoke of, directly. Well Austin—you are gone, and the wheel rolls slowly on—nobody to laugh with—talk with, nobody down in the morning to make the fun for me! Take care of your lungs, Austin—take that just as I told you, and pretty soon you'll be well.

Emilie—

Hope you can read it. I have written to Clark, today, so will Vinnie—Write me just as soon as you can. Mother's love, and Vinnie's.

6 o'clock

Wednesday morn

Dear Austin—I add a word to say that I've got the fires made and waked the individuals, and the Americans are conquering the British on the teakettle. Hope you are happy this morning—hope you are well—Have you taken your medicine yet? Write the effect of it. Will now proceed to get breakfast consisting of hash and brown bread—Dessert—*A. Sauce*. I shall have to employ a Reporter. Wish you a merry breakfast—wish you were here with me. The bath goes briskly on—

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Tuesday Evening. Envelope franked and addressed by Edward Dickinson. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Dec 21.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 119, in part; *L* (1931) 117–118, in part; *Home* 330–331.

Austin had been in Amherst on December 16 to attend the wedding of Emily Fowler and Gordon Ford.

146

To Emily Fowler Ford

21 December 1853

Dear Emily,

Are you there, and shall you always stay there, and is it not dear Emily any more, but Mrs. Ford of Connecticut, and must we stay alone, and will you not come back with the birds and the butterflies, when the days grow long and warm?

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Dear Emily, we are lonely here. I know Col. S[mith] is left, and Mr. and Mrs. K[ellogg], but pussy has run away, and you do not come back again, and the world has grown so long! I knew you would go away, for I know the roses are gathered, but I guessed not yet, not till by expectation we had become resigned. Dear Emily, when it came, and hidden by your veil you stood before us all and made those promises, and when we kissed you, all, and went back to our homes, it seemed to me translation, not any earthly thing, and if a little after you'd ridden on the wind, it would not have surprised me.

And now five days have gone, Emily, and long and silent, and I begin to know that you will not come back again. There's a verse in the Bible, Emily, I don't know where it is, nor just how it goes can I remember, but it's a little like this—"I can go to her, but she cannot come back to me." I guess that isn't right, but my eyes are full of tears, and I'm sure I do not care if I make mistakes or not. Is it happy there, dear Emily, and is the fireside warm, and have you a little cricket to chirp upon the hearth?

How much we think of you—how dearly love you—how often hope for you that it may all be happy.

Sunday evening your father came in—he stayed a little while. I thought he looked solitary. I thought he had grown old. How lonely he must be—I'm sorry for him.

Mother and Vinnie send their love, and hope you are so happy. Austin has gone away. Father comes home to-morrow. I know father will miss you. He loved to meet you here.

"So fades a summer cloud away,  
So smiles the gale when storms are o'er  
So gently shuts the eye of day,  
So dies a wave along the shore."

Kiss me, dear Emily, and remember me if you will, with much respect, to your husband. Will you write me sometime?

Affectionately,  
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 145–146; *L* (1931) 143–144, dated (presumably by ED): Wednesday Eve.

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Emily Fowler married Gordon L. Ford, 16 December 1853. The stanza quoted is from the Barbauld hymn beginning "How blest the righteous when he dies," but it is evidently quoted from memory, since the second word of the second line actually is *sinks*.

147

To Austin Dickinson

27 December 1853

I will write to you Austin, tho' everything is so busy, and we are all flying round as if we were distracted. We send you a little box, containing some good things to help you on your way, and I hope they will please you.

Take good care of yourself, Austin until you get home again, and then we will take care of you—You must have a good time with father—He seems very happy at home, and I guess is happy at Washington—[Sue was with me?] yesterday—I found a—I wont tell you tho' till you get home, I guess—as there are particulars—We think always of you, and hope you are always glad. Father is going now. They have just finished oysters—I wish you could have some.

Love—

Emilie.

Mother wants you to save the box—I have written Emilie Ford. If Clark has come, give our love to him—

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Tuesday noon.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 331–332.

Edward Dickinson came home for the Christmas recess, December 22. He went to Boston to see Austin and carried ED's note with him.

148

To Austin Dickinson

27 December 1853

Austin.

If it wont trouble you too much, are you willing to get me another bottle of my medicine, at Mr Joseph Burnett's, 33—Tremont Row? I did not like to ask Father, because he's always in such a hurry—I hope it wont trouble you—

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MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. The envelope is franked by Edward Dickinson M. C., but addressed in ED's hand: William Austin Dickinson./Law School/Cambridge/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Dec 27.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 332.

Enclosed is a prescription for glycerin and water, one part to three parts (ounces), on which ED has written: "Mr Burnett, 33. Tremont row. Please send *twice* the amount prescribed."

ED's "medicine" is a simple skin lotion, prescribed even today for rough or chapped hands.

149

To Dr. and Mrs. J. G. Holland

2 January 1854

May it come *today*?

Then New Year the sweetest, and long life the merriest, and the Heaven highest—by and by!

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 162; *LL* 189; *L* (1931) 159; *LH* 35: dated (presumably by ED): January 2d.

The first chapter of Holland's *History of Western Massachusetts* appeared in the *Springfield Republican* on 2 January 1854. The *History* ran serially in weekly installments, and was published in book form in 1855. Mrs. Todd's note reads: "Enclosing some leaves, 1854."

150

To Henry V. Emmons

early January 1854

I will be quite happy to ride tomorrow, as you so kindly propose, tho' I regret sincerely not to see you this evening—

Thank you for remembering Father. He seems much better this morning, and I trust will soon be well. I will ride with much pleasure tomorrow, at any hour in the afternoon most pleasant to yourself—

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Please recollect if you will two little volumes of mine which I thought Emily lent you —

Your friend  
E. E. D—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 4). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: NEQ XVI (1943) 368–369.

On his return from Boston on 29 December 1853, Edward Dickinson was in a train that was stalled by heavy snow for twenty hours near Framingham.

151

To Henry V. Emmons

early January 1854

Cousin John & Mr Emmons please not regret the little mishap of last evening, for Vinnie and I quite forgot Mr Saxe, in our delightful ride, and were only disappointed lest you should *think* us so.

Will you please receive these blossoms — I would love to make *two garlands* for certain friends of mine, if the summer were here, and till she comes, perhaps one little cluster will express the wish to both. Please share it together, and come in for an evening as soon as college duties are willing you should do.

Your friends, Emilie  
and Vinnie —

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 5). Ink. Dated: Wednesday morn.

PUBLICATION: NEQ XVI (1943) 369–370.

The letter was sent to both Emmons and John Graves. The currently popular poet John Godfrey Saxe lectured at Easthampton on Tuesday, January 2. There is no record of an engagement in Amherst at the time, yet he seems to have been speaking somewhere within easy reach.

152

To Austin Dickinson

5 January 1854

Austin —

George Howland has just retired from an evening's visit here, and

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I gather my spent energies to write a word to you — "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for they shall have their reward"! Dear Austin — I don't feel funny, and I hope you won't laugh at anything I say. I am thinking of you and Vinnie, what nice times you are having, sitting and talking together, while I am lonely here, and I *wanted* to sit and think of you, and fancy what you were saying, all the evening long, but ——— ordained otherwise. I hope you will have grand times, and don't forget the *unit* without you, at home.

I have had some things from you, to which I perceived no meaning. They either were very vast, or they didn't mean anything, I don't know certainly which. What did you mean by a note you sent me day before yesterday? Father asked me what you wrote and I gave it to him to read — He looked very much confused and finally put on his spectacles, which didn't seem to help him much — I don't think a *telescope* would have assisted him.

I hope you will write to me — I love to hear from you, and now Vinnie is gone, I shall feel very lonely. Susie has been with me today — she is a dear sister to me — She will write and enclose with mine.

Father and Mother are going to South Hadley tomorrow, to be gone all day, and Sue I guess will come to spend the day with me. Prof. Haven will give a Lyceum Lecture next Monday Eve — Subject — Power Ottoman in Europe. There will be a Temperance Lecture in the Hall tomorrow evening. The Academy and Town Schools have been riding "En Masse" this afternoon, and have got home this evening, singing as they came. Well — we were all boys once, as Mrs. Partington says.

Jerry has been to ride today — Left home at Eight this morning — Goal — South Hadley Falls —

Suppose he will return sometime during the evening —

He takes good care of the horse — When shall you come home Austin? We do want to see you again — You must come as soon as you and Vinnie think best, for she will want you some — Don't mind the writing, Austin — for I'm so tired tonight, I can hardly hold my pencil. Love for them all, if there are those to love and think of me, and more and most for you, from

Emily.

If it's perfectly convenient, when you come, I should like the vial filled, which you took away with you —

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MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Thursday Evening. Envelope missing. Much of the third paragraph has been erased, but all of it can be read.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 118–119, in part; *L* (1931) 116–117, in part; AB 98, in part; *Home* 337–338, entire.

Lavinia either went to Boston with her father, or followed alone a few days later. George Howland was her friend. The word “ride” refers to driving or sleighing. Horseback riding is specifically so named.

153

To Edward Everett Hale

13 January 1854

Rev Mr Hale—

Pardon the liberty Sir, which a stranger takes in addressing you, but I think you may be familiar with the last hours of a Friend, and I therefore transgress a courtesy, which in another circumstance, I should seek to observe. I think, Sir, you were the Pastor of Mr B. F. Newton, who died sometime since in Worcester, and I often have hoped to know if his last hours were cheerful, and if he was willing to die. Had I his wife's acquaintance, I w'd not trouble you Sir, but I have never met her, and do not know where she resides, nor have I a friend in Worcester who could satisfy my inquiries. You may think my desire strange, Sir, but the Dead was dear to me, and I would love to know that he sleeps peacefully.

Mr Newton was with my Father two years, before going to Worcester—in pursuing his studies, and was much in our family.

I was then but a child, yet I was old enough to admire the strength, and grace, of an intellect far surpassing my own, and it taught me many lessons, for which I thank it humbly, now that it is gone. Mr Newton became to me a gentle, yet grave Preceptor, teaching me what to read, what authors to admire, what was most grand or beautiful in nature, and that sublimer lesson, a faith in things unseen, and in a life again, nobler, and much more blessed—

Of all these things he spoke—he taught me of them all, earnestly, tenderly, and when he went from us, it was as an elder brother, loved indeed very much, and mourned, and remembered. During his life in Worcester, he often wrote to me, and I replied to his letters—I always asked for his health, and he answered so cheerfully, that while I knew

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he was ill, his death indeed surprised me. He often talked of God, but I do not know certainly if he was his Father in Heaven—Please Sir, to tell me if he was willing to die, and if you think him at Home, I should love so much to know certainly, that he was today in Heaven. Once more, Sir, please forgive the audacities of a Stranger, and a few lines, Sir, from you, at a convenient hour, will be received with gratitude, most happy to requite you, sh'd it have opportunity.

Yours very respectfully,

Emily E. Dickinson

P.S. Please address your reply to Emily E. Dickinson—  
Amherst—Mass—

MANUSCRIPT: Lilly. Ink. Dated: Amherst. Jan 13th.

PUBLICATION: T. F. Madigan's catalog, *The Autograph Album I* (1933) 50, in part; *American Literature* VI (1935) 5, entire; G. F. Whicher, *This Was a Poet* (1938), 84–85, in part.

Hale's reply is not known to survive. ED referred to Newton on at least four other occasions. Her earliest comment is in a letter written to Austin on 27 March 1853, three days after Newton's death (no. 110): “Oh Austin, Newton is dead. The first of my own friends. Pace.” Three later allusions, almost certainly to Newton, are in letters to Higginson. The first, in a letter written in 1862 (no. 261), says: “When a little Girl, I had a friend, who taught me Immortality—but venturing too near, himself—he never returned.” The second, written in the same year (no. 265), comments: “My dying Tutor told me that he would like to live till I had been a poet. . .” The third, written fourteen years later (no. 457), indicates how vivid the memory of Newton continued to remain: “My earliest friend wrote me the week before he died ‘If I live, I will go to Amherst—if I die, I certainly will.’”

None of the correspondence between ED and Newton has ever been found, and the assumption therefore is that important letters revealing the development of Emily Dickinson as a poet have long since been destroyed (see letter no. 30).

154

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

15 January 1854

I'm just from meeting, Susie, and as I sorely feared, my “life” was made a “victim.” I walked—I ran—I turned precarious corners—One

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moment I was not—then soared aloft like Phoenix, soon as the foe was by—and then anticipating an enemy again, my soiled and drooping plumage might have been seen emerging from just behind a fence, vainly endeavoring to fly once more from hence. I reached the steps, dear Susie—I smiled to think of me, and my geometry, during the journey there—It would have puzzled Euclid, and it's doubtful result, have solemnized a Day. How big and broad the aisle seemed, full huge enough before, as I quaked slowly up—and reached my usual seat!

In vain I sought to hide behind your feathers—Susie—feathers and *Bird* had flown, and there I sat, and sighed, and wondered I was scared so, for surely in the whole world was nothing I need to fear—Yet there the Phantom was, and though I kept resolving to be as brave as Turks, and bold as Polar Bears, it didn't help me any. After the opening prayer I ventured to turn around. Mr Carter immediately looked at me—Mr Sweetser attempted to do so, but I discovered *nothing*, up in the sky somewhere, and gazed intently at it, for quite a half an hour. During the exercises I became more calm, and got out of church quite comfortably. Several roared around, and, sought to devour me, but I fell an easy prey to Miss Lovina Dickinson, being too much exhausted to make any farther resistance.

She entertained me with much sprightly remark, until our gate was reached, and I need'nt tell you Susie, just how I clutched the latch, and whirled the merry key, and fairly danced for joy, to find myself *at home*! How I did wish for you—how, for my own dear Vinnie—how for Goliath, or Samson—to pull the whole church down, requesting Mr Dwight to step into Miss Kingsbury's, until the dust was past!

Prof Aaron Warner, late propounder of Rhetoric to youth of Amherst College, gave us the morning sermon. Now Susie, you and I, admire Mr Warner, so my felicity, when he arose to preach, I need not say to you. I will merely remark that I shall be much disappointed if the Rev Horace Walpole doesn't address us this evening.

You can see how things go, dear Susie, when you are not at home. If you stay another Sunday, I hav'nt any doubt that the "Secretary of War" will take charge of the Sabbath School—yet I would not alarm you!

The singing reminded me of the Legend of "Jack and Gill," allowing the Bass Viol to be typified by *Gill*, who literally tumbled after,

while Jack—in the choir, galloped insanely on, "nor recked, nor heeded" him.

Dear Sister, it is passed away, and you and I may speak of dear things, and little things—some of our *trifles* Susie—There's Austin—he's a trifle—and trifling as it is that he is coming Monday, it makes my heart [beat] faster—Vinnie's a trifle too—Oh how I love such trifles. Susie, under that black spot, technically termed a *blot*, the word *beat* may be found—My pen fell from the handle—occasioning the same, but life is too short to transcribe or apologize—I don't doubt Daniel Webster made many a blot, and I think you said, *you* made one, under circumstances quite aggravating! But of Austin and Vinnie—One is with me tomorrow noon, and I shall be so happy.

The one that returns, Susie, is dearer than "ninety and nine" that did not go away. To get you all once more, seems vague and doubtful to me, for it would be so dear. Did you ever think, Susie, that there had been no grave here? To me there are three, now. The longest one is Austin's—I must must plant brave trees there, for Austin was so brave—and Susie, for you and Vinnie I shall plant each a rose, and that will make the birds come.

Sister, I hav'nt asked if you got to Manchester safely, if all is happy, and well, and yet I'm sure it is—if it were not, you would have told me. Susie, the days and hours are very long to me, but you must not come back until it is best and willing.

Please remember me to your friends, with respect and affection, leaving only affection for you—from your own

Emily—

Remember the hint, Susie!

Mother asks if I've given her love.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 19). Ink. Dated: Sabbath Day.

PUBLICATION: LL 31, in part, and altered.

Sue visited Mrs. Samuel C. Bartlett in Manchester, New Hampshire, between January 10 and 24. With her sister and father away, ED felt unprotected. Professor Aaron Warner had resigned on 21 November 1853, because the trustees had adopted a report severely critical of his work without hearing his side of the case. Austin came home shortly after this letter was written—possibly the next day—to stay until March 1.

To Henry V. Emmons

17 February 1854

Please, Sir, to let me  
be a *Valentine* to Thee!

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 9). Ink. Dated: February 17th.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 372.

The message is written in the center of a small elaborately embossed sheet of stationery, evidently made for the purpose.

To Austin Dickinson

14 March 1854

Dear Austin.

It is getting late now, but I guess you'll "have occasion," so I write a word from home—

After you went away yesterday, I washed the dishes, and tried the Drainer—It worked admirably, and reminded me much of you. Mother said I must tell you. Then I worked until dusk, then went to Mr Sweetser's to call on Abiah Root, then walked around to Jerry's and made a call on him—then hurried home to supper, and Mother went to the Lyceum, while John Graves spent the evening with Vinnie and I until past 10—Then I wrote a long letter to Father, in answer to one we had from him yesterday—then crept to bed softly, not to wake all the folks, who had been asleep a long time—I rose at my usual hour, kindled the "fires of Smithfield," and missed you very much in the lower part of the house—you constituting my principal society, at that hour in the day. My family descended after taking their bath, and we breakfasted *frugally*. Mother and Vinnie were quite silent, and there was nobody to make fun with me at the table.

Today has passed as usual—Sue came this afternoon, and we gave her all her things. The note was quite unexpected. I had a letter from Garrick [?] Mallery this evening. Sue and I went up to Mr—Sweetser's to see Abiah—then I went home with her, and had a pleasant time—She said she meant to have you get her letter first, but I ad-

vised not to quarrel on so minute a point—Father wrote a very pleasant letter—said he hoped you had got well. Prof Fowler, was very interesting—so mother said, and had a very good audience—Did'nt you find it very lonely, going back to Mrs Ware's? We speak of it very often.

I would'nt sit up late, if I were you, or study much evenings. Vinnie has been to see Mrs Mack about the house—Mrs Mack says John White is a nice man to be in the house—neat, orderly, clean, and so is his wife—does not drink, she says, and "has took the pledge." Mrs Mack says the only thing is whether he can pay the rent, and he *thinks* he can pay it. Mrs Mack would like to have him there—"a great deal better than Morrison." You must do as you think best.

Mr Field's daughter is dead.

I dont think you left anything—Should I find such, I shall direct it to the "Honorable Edward Dickinson" and send it on!

I hope you wont be lonely in Cambridge—you must think of us all when you are.

And if the cough troubles you follow my prescription, and it will soon get well. You must write whenever you can.

You know you can *telegraph* to Father if you would like to—you are not confined to the pen! It seems pretty still here, Austin, but I shant tell you about it, for twill only make you lonely—Love from Mother. Remember us to Clark. Goodnight—

Emilie—

MANUSCRIPT: AC, Pencil. Dated: Tuesday Evening. Envelope addressed: Wm Austin Dickinson./Law School./Cambridge/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Mar 15.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 342-343.

Austin had delayed his return to Cambridge until March 13 because of illness. Sarah E. Field died of consumption, March 14, aged seventeen.

To Austin Dickinson

16 March 1854

Dear Austin.

Cousin John has passed part of the evening here, and since he took his hat, I have written a letter to Father, and shall now write to



you. Your letter came this noon—Vinnie went after it before we sat down to dinner. You are very kind to write so soon. Dont think we miss you any—hey? Perhaps you know nothing about it. We are indeed very lonely, but so very hard at work that we havnt so much time to think, as you have. I hope your room will seem more cheerful when you've been there a little while.

You must'nt think anything about Mrs Ware. Since you went back to Cambridge, the weather has been wonderful, the thermometer every noon between 60 and 70°. above zero, and the air full of birds.

Today has not seemed like a day. It has been most unearthly—so mild, so bright, so still, the kitchen windows open, and fires uncomfortable.

Since supper it lightens frequently—In the South you can see the lightning, in the North the Northern Lights. Now a furious wind blows, just from the north and west, and winter comes back again.

Sue was here yesterday and today—spent a part of both afternoons with us. Seems much like old times. We gave her the letter. Vinnie's bundle came today, after giving her great suspense. Mr Potter brought it to the house himself, and seemed very pleasant indeed. I went to the door—I liked him. Mary Warner and her friend Abbie Adams, made a call of about an hour, here this forenoon. They had been *taking a walk*. I think any sentiment must be consecrated by an interview in the mud. There would be certainly, a correspondence in *depth*.

There is to be a Party at Prof Haven's tomorrow night, for married people merely. Celibacy excludes me and my sister. Father and mother are invited. Mother will go.

Emiline and Jennie Hitchcock were both here this afternoon.

Mrs Noyes is sewing up stairs. Jerry went for her with our horse. Mr Cabot said there was no danger and Jerry drove very carefully. Jerry asked us yesterday when we were writing to Mr Austin, to tell him Fanny was much improved by recent exercise, and looked finer than ever. Jerry is so kind and pleasant that I cant bear the thought of his going away.

He speaks of you with great admiration. We are going to send two little cakes of maple sugar to Father tomorrow. We thought it would please him.

Miller came here yesterday to see if Father wanted to hire him this summer—said he had had a fine offer, and before accepting it,

would like to know if he was needed here. He wanted us to ask you when we wrote. I think he is a humbug. I hope you wont employ him.

I have more to say, but am too tired to now. Mother and Vinnie send love—They are both getting ready for Washington. Take care of yourself Austin, and dont get melancholy. Remember Clark.

Emilie—

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Thursday Evening. Envelope addressed: Wm Austin Dickinson./Law School./Cambridge/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Mar 17.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 120, in part; L (1931) 118–119, in part; *Home* 344–345, entire.

It has been generally assumed until now that ED accompanied her brother, mother, and sister to Washington in April 1854. Evidence now leads to the conclusion that she did not go until February 1855. The final paragraph of this letter makes clear that she intends to remain home at this time. A letter from Edward Dickinson to Austin, written March 13 (*Home* 339) says:

I have written home, to have Lavinia come with yr mother & you—& Emily too, if she will—but that I will not insist upon her coming.

ED's letter of March 19 (no. 158) to Austin tells him that "Cousin John is going to stay here at night when they are away, and wants to know quite eagerly 'when it is to come off.'" Austin heard from his father again on the twenty-fourth (*Home* 354):

I hear from home that yr mother & Lavinia are getting ready as fast as possible, to come here. I should like to have you all come as early in April as you can.

On March 26 ED comments to Austin (letter no. 159): "The sewing is moving on—I guess the folks will be ready by next week Tuesday." But the final direct evidence that ED remained home at this time is contained in a letter (Dartmouth College—Bartlett papers) written by Susan Gilbert to her friend Mrs. Samuel C. Bartlett, in April:

I forgot to tell you—I am keeping house with Emily, while the family are in Washington—We frighten each other to death nearly every night—with that exception, we have very independent times.

For further data, see the notes to letters no. 178 and 179.

To Austin Dickinson

19, 21 March 1854

I have just come from meeting, Austin—Mr Luke Sweetser presided, and young Mr Hallock made a prayer which I don't doubt you heard in Cambridge—It was really very audible—Mr Dwight was not there—Sue did not go—Tempe Linnell sat by me—I asked her if she was engaged to Sam Fiske, and she said *no*, so you can tell Mrs Jones she was slightly mistaken. Have you had a pleasant day, Austin? Have you been to meeting today? We have had a lovely Sunday, and have thought of you very much. Mr Dwight preached all day. Mr Williston and [William S.] Clark were at our church this morning—There was a letter read from the Congregational c'h in Washington—D C, requesting the company of the Pastor and a Delegate, at the ordination of that Rev Mr Duncan, who was so much admired by Father when he was at home before—Father was chosen Delegate, but whether Mr Dwight will go or not, I don't know—

Tuesday morning—

Austin—I had'n't time to finish my note Sunday night—I shall do so now—Received your note last evening, and laughed all night till now—You must not be so facetious—It will never do. Susie was here when the note arrived, and we just sat and screamed. I shall keep the letter always. Marcia is here this morning—the work goes briskly on—

We are almost beside ourselves with business, and company—"Lysander" has not yet called—Emmons spent Friday evening here. I went with Cousin John last evening to call on Sue—stayed till most 11—and had a splendid time—Sue seemed her very finest—She sends this little note.

Was at Mr Dwight's yesterday—they had a great deal to say about you and Susie and how happy Vinnie and I must be to have such a beautiful sister?]

We had two letters from Father last night—one to mother and one to me—I shall telegraph to him soon! Charlie sings every day—Everybody admires him—You must tell Aunt Lavinia—

How did Mr Bourne bear the announcement that both the black eyes were disposed of? It must have been quite a shock to him. Mrs Noyes has gone home—Helped us a great deal—Cenith has just arrived, so between her and "Judah" and Marcia and Miss Cooly, I

guess the folks will go—Cousin John is going to stay here at night when they are away, and wants to know quite eagerly "when it is to come off." I am glad you have got settled and are not afraid of ghosts. You must have pleasant times with Clark.

We all send our love to you—Wont you write soon about John White—He is anxious to know, and Mrs Mack wants very much to have him come in there. Good bye Austin—Great hurrah—Remember us always to Clark—

Emily—

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Dated: Sunday Evening. Envelope addressed (in ink): Wm Austin Dickinson./Law School./Cambridge./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Mar 22.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 346–351, with facsimile 347–350.

An attempt has been made to alter every reference to Sue. The women named in the paragraph next to the last evidently were seamstresses and other helpers called in to assist Mrs. Dickinson and Lavinia to prepare for their impending trip to Washington.

To Austin Dickinson

26 March 1854

Well Austin—it's Sunday evening—Vinnie is sick with the ague—Mother taking a tour of the second story as she is wont Sabbath evening—the wind is blowing high, the weather very cold, and I am rather cast down, in view of all these circumstances. Vinnie's face began to ache Friday—that night, and yesterday, and last night, she suffered intensely, and nothing seemed to relieve her. Today she is better—has sat up in the big rockingchair most of the time, and seems quite bright this evening. I guess she'll be smart tomorrow. She sends her love to you and says you will sympathize with her. I went to meeting alone all day. I assure you I felt very solemn. I went to meeting five minutes before the bell rang, morning and afternoon, so not to have to go in after all the people had got there. I came home with Sue from meeting. She said she wished you had heard Mr Dwight's sermons today. He has preached wonderfully, and I thought all the afternoon how I wished you were there.

The sewing is moving on—I guess the folks will be ready by next week Tuesday. That is the day fixed now. I have to work very hard. I don't write to you very often now, and I can't till all this is over. I should love to see you this evening. I told Vinnie a few minutes ago that it seemed very funny not to see you putting on your surtout, and asking us if we would like to call at Mrs Jones'! I received several notes, or paragraphs, from you, in the course of the week, for which I am much obliged. The wind has blown a gale for the last week, in Amherst.

Sue and I went to the Depot yesterday to get "Vinnie's Express," and we had to hold our bonnets on and take hold of each other too, to keep from blowing away. We had a snow storm here last week, and there's a covering of snow on the ground now.

Mr Sweetser's family went to meeting in a sleigh, so you can see there's a little. Sam Fiske called here this evening. I will tell you something funny. You know Vinnie sent Father a box of maple sugar—She got the box at the store and it said on the outside of it, "1 Doz Genuine Quaker Soap." We didn't hear from the box, and so many days had passed, we began to feel anxious lest it had never reached him, and Mother writing soon, alluded in her letter to the "sugar sent by the girls," and the funniest letter from Father, came in answer to her's. It seems the box went straightway, but father not knowing the hand, merely took off the papers in which the box was wrapped, and the Label "Quaker Soap" so far imposed upon him, that he put the box in a drawer with his *shaving materials*, and supposed himself well stocked with an excellent Quaker soap, until mother gave him the hint, which led to the discovery. He said he really supposed it a plan for the progress of soap, until he had mother's letter. We all send our love to you, and want you should write us often.

Good night—from

Emilie—

I spelt a word wrong in this letter, but I know better, so you needn't think you have caught me.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday Evening. Envelope addressed: Wm Austin Dickinson./Law School./Cambridge/Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Mar 27.

PUBLICATION: L (1894) 121-122, in part; L (1931) 119-120, in part; *Home* 356-357, entire.

To John L. Graves

spring 1854?

Dear John—

Be happy—

Emily—

Early Monday morning—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (G 7). Pencil. Addressed: Cousin John.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 400.

See letter no. 170.

To Emily Fowler Ford

spring 1854

I have just come home from meeting, where I have been all day, and it makes me so happy to think of writing you that I forget the sermon and minister and all, and think of none but you. . . . I miss you always, dear Emily, and I think now and then that I can't stay without you, and half make up my mind to make a little bundle of all my earthly things, bid my blossoms and home good-by, and set out on foot to find you. But we have so much matter of fact here that I don't dare to go, so I keep on sighing, and wishing you were here.

I know you would be happier amid this darling spring than in ever so kind a city, and you would get well much faster drinking our morning dew—and the world here is so beautiful, and things so sweet and fair, that your heart would be soothed and comforted.

I would tell you about the spring if I thought it might persuade you even now to return, but every bud and bird would only afflict you and make you sad where you are, so not one word of the robins, and not one word of the bloom, lest it make the city darker, and your own home more dear.

But nothing forgets you, Emily, not a blossom, not a bee; for in the merriest flower there is a pensive air, and in the bonniest bee a sorrow—they know that you are gone, they know how well you loved them, and in their little faces is sadness, and in their mild eyes, tears. But another spring, dear friend, you must and shall be here, and no-



body can take you away, for I will hide you and keep you — and who would think of taking you if I hold you tight in my arms?

Your home looks very silent — I try to think of things funny, and turn the other way when I am passing near, for sure I am that looking would make my heart too heavy, and make my eyes so dim. How I do long once more to hear the household voices, and see you there at twilight sitting in the door — and I shall when the leaves fall, sha'n't I, and the crickets begin to sing?

You must not think sad thoughts, dear Emily. I fear you are doing so, from your sweet note to me, and it almost breaks my heart to have you so far away, where I cannot comfort you.

All will be well, I know, and I know all will be happy, and I so wish I was near to convince my dear friend so. I want very much to hear how Mr. Ford is now. I hope you will tell me, for it's a good many weeks since I have known anything of him. You and he may come this way any summer; and how I hope he may — and I shall pray for him, and for you, and for your home on earth, which will be next the one in heaven.

Your very affectionate,  
Emilie.

I thank you for writing me, one precious little "forget-me-not" to bloom along my way. But one little one is lonely — pray send it a blue-eyed mate, that it be not alone. Here is love from mother and father and Vinnie and me. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 142-144; *L* (1931) 141-143, dated (presumably by ED): Sunday Afternoon.

Before moving to Brooklyn, New York, where they permanently resided, the Gordon Lester Fords lived briefly in New London, Connecticut.

162

To Henry V. Emmons  
Friend.

about 1854

I look in my casket and miss a pearl — I fear you intend to defraud me.

[ 294 ]

Please not forget your promise to pay "mine own, with usury."

I thank you for Hypatia, and ask you what it means?

Have you heard from your friend, Miss Judkins, recently? I desire to write to her, but have not her address, and will you please tell Johnny if a little note to her would make your next too heavy.

Your Friend  
Emilie —

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 12). Pencil. Dated: Tuesday morn.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 372.

Kingsley's *Hypatia* was published in 1853. Eliza Maria Judkins had taught drawing, painting, and penmanship at Amherst Academy in 1841-1842, and had probably been one of ED's teachers. The first sentence of the letter may be a reminder that Emmons still has not returned the book which ED had lent him (see letter no. 150). Johnny Beston was a youthful handyman.

163

To Henry V. Emmons

May 1854?

Friend —

I said I should send some flowers this week. I had rather not until next week — My Vale Lily asked me to wait for her. I told her if you were willing — Please say by little Johnnie if next week is acceptable —

Your friend,  
Emilie —

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 10). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 372.

164

To Henry V. Emmons

May 1854?

Receive us —

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 11). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 372.

The note probably accompanied flowers.

[ 295 ]

To Austin Dickinson

early June 1854

Well Austin—

Sunday has come again, and it really seems to me you have been gone a good while.

I hope you will get home before a great many Sundays—It seems quite lonely here, and when I think Sue is going, I confess things seem too solitary, but so we go—

I went home from meeting with Sue, and stayed in her room sometime—She wondered she didn't hear from you Saturday—so did we—Sue is afraid you are sick—I say you are hard at work, and that's why we don't hear from you. Sue is well—we see her every day—How we shall miss her!

I went out before tea tonight, and trained the Honeysuckle—it grows very fast and finely.

Both of them are full of buds. I take good care of the tree—give it a pail of water every day, and certainly it looks stouter, and we all think it will live.

Your grove looks beautifully too—I went down there tonight.

John Emerson just went away from here—he has been spending the evening, and I'm so tired now, that I write just as it happens, so you mustn't expect any style.

This is truly extempore, Austin—I have no notes in my pocket.

Vinnie has gone to bed—Mother is giving the finishing stroke to a letter to Father, out on the kitchen stand—so you see I am all alone.

We have called upon Mary Lyman—had a very pleasant call—she spoke of you very admiringly.

Emily Fowler is here still—will leave in a day or two. We have been to see her, and she has been to see us—She seems very sincere and affectionate—Mr Ford is spending the Sabbath here—Little Pat holds on yet, tho' I expect every morning he'll be bound out for life, and we shall be in the lurch again. He asked me tonight if I had a newspaper—Why, said I, "Pat, can you read"? "Yes marm" he answered—I asked him what kind of a one he thought he should like—"Oh" said he with the utmost gravity "I want to read the *newses*." I gave him two *Lawrence Couriers*, at which he seemed quite over-

come—I presume it was a munificence very grand to him—Horace works finely, and seems to feel just as much interest, as if it was all his own—We hear from Father about every day—he is fast getting well, and writes in good spirits—

We cleaned house all last week—that is to say—Mother and Vinnie did, and I scolded, because they moved my things—I can't find much left anywhere, that I used to wear, or know of. You will easily conclude that I am surrounded by trial.

Austin—Mrs Fay wants very much to have you purchase a few articles for their parlor, before you come, if you are willing to. She said she asked Father about it, and he told her you got everything of the sort here, and if you had the time, you would be willing to get a few things for her—She wants a large Rocking Chair—a WhatNot—One or two Ottomans—and a little article of the Tete a Tete fashion. She will leave it all to your taste, and thank you very much if you will do it for her.

I hope it won't trouble you—Sue says she guesses it won't—Sue says you can step into a furniture store—order what you want, and have it packed and forwarded, without farther trouble to you. There's no more room tonight, Austin—Much love for you—Write.

Emilie—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 11). Ink. Dated: Sunday Evening.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 192–195, in part.

When this letter was written, Austin was within a few weeks of his Law School examination and admission to the Massachusetts bar. Susan Gilbert had been planning to join her sister Martha at Geneva, New York, shortly, but she was not able to go before August. Horace Church had recently been put in charge of the Dickinson grounds. For a note on little Pat, see Appendix 2. Emily Fowler Ford had come home for a visit, as ED hoped when she wrote to her earlier in the spring.

To Abiah Root

about 25 July 1854

My dear Child.

Thank you for that sweet note, which came so long ago, and thank

you for asking me to come and visit you, and thank you for loving me, long ago, and today, and too for all the sweetness, and all the gentleness, and all the tenderness with which you remember me—your quaint, old fashioned friend.

I wanted very much to write you sooner, and I tried frequently, but till now in vain, and as I write tonight, it is with haste, and fear lest something still detain me. You know my dear Abiah, that the summer has been warm, that we have not a girl, that at this pleasant season, we have much company—that this irresolute body refuses to serve sometimes, and the indignant tenant can only hold it's peace—all this you know, for I have often told you, and yet I say it again, if mayhap it persuade you that I do love you indeed, and have not done neglectfully. Then Susie, our dear friend, has been very ill for several weeks, and every hour possible I have taken away to her, which has made even smaller my "inch or two, of time." Susie is better now, but has been suffering much within the last few weeks, from a Nervous Fever, which has taken her strength very fast. She has had an excellent Nurse, a faithful Physician, and her sister has been unwearied in her watchfulness, and last of all, *God* has been loving and kind, so to reward them all, poor Susie just begins to trudge around a little—went as far as her garden, Saturday, and picked a few flowers, so when I called to see her, Lo a bright boquet, sitting upon the mantel, and Susie in the easy-chair, quite faint from the effort of arranging them—I make my story long, but I knew you loved Susie—Abiah, and I thought her mishaps, quite as well as her brighter fortunes, would interest you.

I think it was in June, that your note reached here, and I did snatch a moment to call upon your friend. Yet I went in the dusk, and it was Saturday evening, so even then, Abiah, you see how cares pursued me—I found her very lovely in what she said to me, and I fancied in her face so, although the gentle dusk would draw her curtain close, and I didn't see her clearly. We talked the most of you—a theme we surely loved, or we had not discussed it in preference to all. I would love to meet her again—and love to see her longer.

Please give my love to her, for your sake. You asked me to come and see you—I must speak of that. I thank you Abiah, but I don't go from home, unless emergency leads me by the hand, and then I do it obstinately, and draw back if I can. Should I ever leave home,

which is improbable, I will with much delight, accept your invitation; till then, my dear Abiah, my warmest thanks are your's, but don't expect me. I'm so old fashioned, Darling, that all your friends would stare. I should have to bring my work bag, and my big spectacles, and I half forgot my grandchildren, my pin-cushion, and Puss—Why think of it seriously, Abiah—*do* you think it my *duty* to leave? Will you write me again? Mother and Vinnie send their love, and here's a kiss from me—

Good Night, from Emily—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (ARS 10). Ink. Dated: Tuesday Evening.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 63–64, in part; *L* (1931) 55–56, in part.

On August 4, Susan Gilbert went to Geneva. This is ED's last known letter to Abiah, who married the Reverend Samuel W. Strong later in the year. There is a finality to the last paragraph which suggests that this letter terminated the correspondence between them.

167

To Austin Dickinson

summer 1854

Dear Austin.

Your letter came—I have just come from Sue's—I suppose you didn't expect to hear from me today, as you saw Sue yesterday. I sat with her some time tonight. She is better and gaining—seemed quite like herself tonight—talked a good deal; and laughed.

Several had been in to see her this afternoon—Mr Dwight—Abbie Wood and Emeline—I guess Mr Dwight knows you have gone—he called to inquire for her yesterday, and went in to see her today—You had better come *hum* and shoot him. Such liberties towards "a man," when a man is gone away, are not to be tolerated! I gave your note to Mrs Cutler—She told me to tell you from her, that Sue had eaten chicken broth *twice* today, and a chicken leg—She designs eating a wing tomorrow—and Mrs Cutler wished me to tell you that she thought she would soon be off. I tell you just as she told me—don't know whether it's to be understood literally or figuratively—cant tell—you must act according to your best judgment. I think it's rather a serious thing to be an affianced being—I don't want to frighten you—



still, when I think it over, it seems no trifling matter. They all allude to you as to a missing Saint, from whose serener presence suddenly called to remove, and as none of them speak of you, or of your noble acts, without plentiful tears, I have considerable work to arrange my emotions. Mrs. Cutler sends word also, that the package came today, safely. As she did not allude to the contents—I naturally conclude that it contained a Bear—derive much satisfaction from contemplating my shrewdness—Hope “Self and wife” will always be so “uniform”—hope I give no offense—Had a letter from father yesterday—well and in excellent spirits. Today has been very fine—Little Pat is in rotary motion. I will attend to the Horse—am going to spend tomorrow forenoon with Sue—Must’nt write any more—Come as soon as your business is over—glad you took care of the Newman’s—Dont forget the guano—What did you think of Joe Howard’s wife?

Vinnie will write you a note, if she concludes her exercises in the morning. Love from all.

Good night—Emily.

P.S—For *home* read *hum*. For Mrs C—Miss Williams—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 12). Ink (except for the postscript, which is in pencil). Dated: Tuesday night.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 195, in part.

The Reverend Edward S. Dwight was installed in the First Church, July 19. Austin was graduated from the Law School on July 19, but did not stay to receive his diploma because his mother wished him to take her to the semicentennial celebration of Monson Academy, held July 17–18. (Edward Dickinson did not return from Washington until August 7.) Austin then went back to Cambridge, packed up, and returned permanently to Amherst. This letter must have been written either on July 25 or August 1.

168

To Henry V. Emmons

8 August 1854

Friend—

Will *your* friend be in town this evening?

If so, cant you steal her away a little while from the Exercises, and bring her down to me?

[ 300 ]

Our guests will all be out, and I’d so love to see her that asking it,  
I write—

Your friend,  
Emily—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 8). Pencil. Dated: Tuesday morning.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 374.

The 1854 commencement exercises at Amherst College were held on Thursday, August 10, and Emmons was to graduate. ED wanted to meet Susan Phelps of Hadley, to whom he had become engaged.

169

To Henry V. Emmons

August 1854

My heart is full of joy, Friend—Were not my parlor full, I’d bid you come this morning, but the hour must be *stiller* in which we speak of *her*. Yet must I see you, and I will love most dearly, if quite convenient to you, to ride a little while this afternoon—Do not come if it’s not so, and please tell little Pat when you will like to go, if you still find it possible—Of her I cannot write, yet do I thank the Father who’s given her to you, and wait impatiently to speak with you—Please not regard the ride, unless it be most convenient—

My hand trembles—

Truly and warmly,  
Emily—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 14). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 374.

ED met Susan Phelps sometime before Emmons left Amherst during the week after commencement. This note seems to have been written the morning after the meeting.

170

To John L. Graves

15 August 1854

Dear John—

Are you very happy? Why did’nt you tell me so before you went away? And why too, did’nt I ask you that pleasant evening long, when we sat and talked together?

[ 301 ]

I have wanted to ask you many times, and I thought you would tell me, but someone would come in, and something else would happen and put me all to flight – but tonight, John, so still is it, and the moon so mild, I'm sure that you would tell me, were you sitting here. You know what I mean, don't you, and if you are so happy, I kneel and thank God for it, before I go to sleep.

Then you and your former College friend are reconciled again – he told me all about it, and tears of happiness came shining in my eyes. Forgiving one another as Jesus – us.

I have hoped for this very often, John, when you were fast asleep, and my eyes will shut much sooner, now all is peace. I loved to have you both my friends, and friends to one another, and it grieved me very often that you were enemies – now all is safe. It is lonely without you John – we miss you very much, and I'm thinking we'll miss you more when a year from now comes, and the crickets sing.

Quite sad it is when friends go, and sad when all are gone, to sit by pensive window, and recollect them, but I would not forget them – Please not forget us John, in your long vacation – We'll often think of you, and wish that we could see you. Mary is with us yet. Eliza went yesterday morning. I miss her thoughtful eyes, and did not Mary's merry ones linger with us still, the day would be too long; but Mary strokes the sunshine and coaxes it along, and drives the shadows home – much like a "honie bee" she seems, among more antique insects! She wants me to give you her compliments, and say to you beside, that she thanks you sincerely for the "social capacity,["] which she forgot to do, there were so many in. Good night, and gentle dreams, John – my pen is very bad. I write not any more. Vinnie sends her love.

Mine if you will to Hattie, and for your mother too. Had you been here tonight, John, I should have talked with you – You are not, and I write – I "wish you a merry Christmas," and a vacation as good as summer days are long –

Affy,  
Emilie –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (G 3). Ink. Dated: Tuesday Evening.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 399–400.

Since there is no other allusion to the misunderstanding and recon-

ciliation between John Graves and his friend, the natural inference that Henry Emmons was the friend cannot be verified (but see letter no. 160). The identity of "Mary" is also uncertain. She and Eliza Coleman seem to have been among the Dickinson commencement guests of whom ED had written in her letter to Emmons of August 8. A year earlier there had been some correspondence between Lavinia and Austin about inviting a Mary Nichols to visit them (*Home* 307). Another Boston girl, Mary Lyman, may have been the one (see nos. 71 and 87). "Hattie" was John Graves's younger sister. He had gone home for the summer vacation before starting his senior year at Amherst.

171

To Henry V. Emmons

18 August 1854

I find it Friend – I read it – I stop to thank you for it, just as the world is still – I thank you for them all – the pearl, and then the onyx, and then the emerald stone.

My crown, indeed! I do not fear the king, attired in this grandeur.

Please send me gems again – I have a flower. It looks like them, and for it's bright resemblances, receive it.

A pleasant journey to you, both in the pathway home, and in the longer way – Then "golden morning's open flowings, shall sway the trees to murmurous bowings, in metric chant of blessed poems" –

Have I convinced you Friend?

Pleasantly,  
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (E 8). Pencil. Dated: Friday Evening.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XVI (1943) 371.

Before leaving Amherst, Emmons sent a farewell gift to ED, probably a book of poems. An interpretation is offered by Aurelia G. Scott in *NEQ* XVI (December 1943) 627–628, in which the writer points out that the initial letters of pearl, onyx, and emerald spell "Poe." The lines at the end form the conclusion of an essay by Emmons published in the *Amherst Collegiate Magazine* for July 1854, entitled "The Words of Rock Rimmon": "And I arose and looked forth upon the broad plain with a strange earnestness thrilling in my heart.

The golden morning's open flowings,  
Did sway the trees in murmurous bowings,  
In metric chant of blessed poems."

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

late August 1854

Susie—

I have been very busy since you went away, but that is'n't the reason I've not written to you, and we've had a great deal of company too, but *that* is not the reason—I was foolish eno' to be vexed at a little thing, and I hope God will forgive me, as he'll have to many times, if he lives long enough.

Thro' Austin, I've known of you, and nobody in this world except Vinnie and Austin, know that in all the while, I have not heard from you. Many have asked me for you, and I have answered promptly that you had reached there safely, and were better every day, and Susie, do you think, H. Hinsdale came to our house several days ago; came just to ask for you, and went away supposing I'd heard from you quite often. Not that I told her so, but spoke of you so naturally, in such a daily way, she never guessed the fact that I'd not written to you, nor had you thus to me.

Never think of it, Susie—never mention it—I trust your truth for that, but when you meet, and I meet—we'll try and forgive each other. There has not been a day, Child, that I've not thought of you, nor have I shut my eyes upon a summer night, without your sweet remembrance, and tho' full much of sorrow has gathered at your name, that ought but peace was 'tween us, yet I remembered on, and bye and bye the day came. I do not miss you Susie—of course I do not miss you—I only sit and stare at nothing from my window, and know that all is gone—Dont *feel* it—no—any more than the stone feels, that it is very cold, or the block, that it is silent, where once 'twas warm and green, and birds danced in it's branches.

I rise, because the sun shines, and sleep has done with me, and I brush my hair, and dress me, and wonder what I am and who has made me so, and then I wash the dishes, and anon, wash them again, and then 'tis afternoon, and Ladies call, and evening, and some members of another sex come in to spend the hour, and then that day is done. And, prithee, what is Life? There was much that was sweet Commencement week—much too that was dusty, but my bee gathered many drops of the sweetest and purest honey—

I had many talks with Emmons, which I will not forget, and a

charming farewell ride, before he went away—he stayed more than a week after Commencement was done, and came to see me often—He brought his Hadley friend to pass the day with me, and we passed it very sweetly—*Her* name is Susie too, and that endeared me to her.

I shall miss Emmons very much. Father and mother were gone last week, upon a little journey—and we rested somewhat, like most ungodly children—John came down twice from Sunderland, to pass a day with us. Susie, I wished for you—Tell that little Sister of your's, I would have welcomed her—She understands the orgies! When Mr Pan Prankin takes his leave, I trust to hear from her—*Until* then, "Mr Bugby understands it perfectly." It's of no use to write to you—Far better bring dew in my thimble to quench the endless fire—My love for those I love—not many—not very many, but dont I love them so?—and Vinnie's love and Mother's for Martha and for you. Write if you love, to

Emilie—

Pat "still lives." I am going to meeting now—Meet me at the Academy, and we will sit together—Mrs Timothy Smith and Mrs Noble Goodale take turns sitting by me now—Mrs Goodale got me the last time.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 21). Ink. Dated: Sabbath Evening.

PUBLICATION: *LL* 49, in part, and altered (the final sentence is from a letter to Mrs. Holland, no. 318).

Susan Gilbert, after spending some weeks with relatives in Geneva and Aurora, New York, joined her brothers in Grand Haven, Michigan, where she remained several months. For Pat, see letter no. 165, and Appendix 2.

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson)

about 1854

Sue—you can go or stay—There is but one alternative—We differ often lately, and this must be the last.

You need not fear to leave me lest I should be alone, for I often part with things I fancy I have loved,—sometimes to the grave, and sometimes to an oblivion rather bitterer than death—thus my heart



bleeds so frequently that I shant mind the hemorrhage, and I only add an agony to several previous ones, and at the end of day remark—a bubble burst!

Such incidents would grieve me when I was but a child, and perhaps I could have wept when little feet hard by mine, stood still in the coffin, but eyes grow dry sometimes, and hearts get crisp and cinder, and had as lief burn.

Sue—I have lived by this. It is the lingering emblem of the Heaven I once dreamed, and though if this is taken, I shall remain alone, and though in that last day, the Jesus Christ you love, remark he does not know me—there is a darker spirit will not disown it's child.

Few have been given me, and if I love them so, that for *idolatry*, they are removed from me—I simply murmur *gone*, and the billow dies away into the boundless blue, and no one knows but me, that one went down today. We have walked very pleasantly—Perhaps this is the point at which our paths diverge—then pass on singing Sue, and up the distant hill I journey on.

I have a Bird in spring  
Which for myself doth sing—  
The spring decoys.  
And as the summer nears—  
And as the Rose appears,  
Robin is gone.

Yet do I not repine  
Knowing that Bird of mine  
Though flown—  
Learneth beyond the sea  
Melody new for me  
And will return.

Fast in a safer hand  
Held in a truer Land  
Are mine—  
And though they now depart,  
Tell I my doubting heart  
They're thine.

In a screener Bright,  
In a more golden light  
I see  
Each little doubt and fear,  
Each little discord here  
Removed.

Then will I not repine,  
Knowing that Bird of mine  
Though flown  
Shall in a distant tree  
Bright melody for me  
Return.

E—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 17). Ink. Dated: Tuesday morning.

PUBLICATION: The letter is unpublished. The poem is in *FF* 181–182; *Poems* (1955) 7–8.

There is nothing in other letters to indicate a rift between the girls at this time. The draft of a letter (HCL-Dickinson collection) from Austin to Susan, 23 September 1851, alludes to some differences between the girls about which he refuses to take sides, but this letter is in the handwriting of 1854. It is placed here to follow the emotional tone of the letter to Susan of late August, though the disagreement on spiritual matters that seems to lie behind it may have no connection with the feeling of neglect shown in the earlier one.

174

To Mrs. J. G. Holland

15 September 1854

Thank you, dear Mrs. Holland—Vinnie and I will come, if you would you like to have us. We should have written before, but mother has not been well, and we hardly knew whether we could leave her, but she is better now, and I write quite late this evening, that if you still desire it, Vinnie and I will come. Then, dear Mrs. Holland, if agreeable to you, we will take the Amherst train on Tuesday morning, for Springfield, and be with you at noon.

The cars leave here at nine o'clock, and I think reach Springfield at twelve. I can think just how we dined with you a year ago from now, and it makes my heart beat faster to think perhaps we'll see you so little while from now.

To live a thousand years would not make me forget the day and night we spent there, and while I write the words, I don't believe I'm coming, so sweet it seems to me. I hope we shall not tire you; with all your other cares, we fear we should not come, but you *will* not let us trouble you, will you, dear Mrs. Holland?

Father and mother ask a very warm remembrance to yourself and Dr. Holland.

We were happy the grapes and figs seemed acceptable to you, and wished there were many more. I am very sorry to hear that "Kate" has such excellent lungs. With all your other cares, it must be quite a trial to you.

It is also a source of pleasure to me that Annie goes to sleep, on account of the "interregnum" it must afford to you.

Three days and we are there — happy — very happy! Tomorrow I will sew, but I shall think of you, and Sunday sing and pray — yet I shall not forget you, and Monday's very near, and here's to me on Tuesday! Good-night, dear Mrs. Holland — I see I'm getting wild — you will forgive me all, and not *forget* me all, though? Vinnie is fast asleep, or her love would be here — though she is, it is. Once more, if it is fair, we will come on Tuesday, and you love to have us, but if not convenient, please surely tell us so.

Affectionately,

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 155–157; *LL* 184–185; *L* (1931) 155–156; *LH* 42–44, dated (presumably by ED): Friday Evening.

The occasion for the visit may have been the flower show that was held in Springfield on Tuesday, 19 September 1854. The *Springfield Republican* for Wednesday of that week reported that an unusual number of visitors had come to town to attend the show.

To Dr. and Mrs. J. G. Holland

about 26 November 1854

Dear Friends,

I thought I would write again. I write you many letters with pens which are not seen. Do you receive them?

I think of you all today, and dreamed of you last night.

When father rapped on my door to wake me this morning, I was walking with you in the most wonderful garden, and helping you pick — roses, and though we gathered with all our might, the basket was never full. And so all day I pray that I may walk with you, and gather roses again, and as night draws on, it pleases me, and I count impatiently the hours 'tween me and the darkness, and the dream of you and the roses, and the basket never full.

God grant the basket fill not, till, with hands purer and whiter, we gather flowers of gold in baskets made of pearl; higher — higher! It seems long since we heard from you — long, since how little Annie was, or any one of you — so long since Cattle Show, when Dr. Holland was with us. Oh, it always seems a long while from our seeing you, and even when at your house, the nights seemed much more long than they're wont to do, because separated from you. I want so much to know if the friends are all well in that dear cot in Springfield — and if well whether happy, and happy — *how* happy, and why, and what bestows the joy? And then those other questions, asked again and again, whose answers are so sweet, do they love — remember us — wish sometimes we were there? Ah, friends — dear friends — perhaps my queries tire you, but I so long to know.

The minister to-day, not our own minister, preached about death and judgment, and what would become of those, meaning Austin and me, who behaved improperly — and somehow the sermon scared me, and father and Vinnie looked very solemn as if the whole was true, and I would not for worlds have them know that it troubled me, but I longed to come to you, and tell you all about it, and learn how to be better. He preached such an awful sermon though, that I didn't much think I should ever see you again until the Judgment Day, and then you would not speak to me, according to his story. The subject of perdition seemed to please him, somehow. It seems very solemn to me. I'll tell you all about it, when I see you again.

I wonder what you are doing today—if you have been to meeting? Today has been a fair day, very still and blue. Tonight the crimson children are playing in the west, and tomorrow will be colder. How sweet if I could see you, and talk of all these things! Please write us very soon. The days with you last September seem a great way off, and to meet you again, delightful. I'm sure it won't be long before we sit together.

Then will I not repine, knowing that bird of mine, though flown—  
learneth beyond the sea, melody new for me, and will return.

Affectionately,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 160–162; *L* (1931) 157–159; *LH* 37–38, dated (presumably by ED): Sabbath Afternoon.

The letter is placed here because the phrasing of the reference to the weather exactly parallels that in the letter which follows, written to Susan Gilbert on November 27; and because the conclusion echoes lines from the poem sent to Susan in September (letter no. 173).

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To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson) 27 November–3 December 1854

Susie—it is a little thing to say how lone it is—anyone can do it, but to wear the liveness next your heart for weeks, when you sleep, and when you wake, ever missing something, *this*, all cannot say, and it baffles me. I would paint a portrait which would bring the tears, had I canvass for it, and the scene should be—*solitude*, and the figures—*solitude*—and the lights and shades, each a solitude. I could fill a chamber with landscapes so lone, men should pause and weep there; then haste grateful home, for a loved one left. Today has been a fair day, very still and blue. Tonight, the crimson children are playing in the West, and tomorrow will be colder. In all I number you. I want to think of you each hour in the day. What you are saying—doing—I want to walk with you, as seeing yet unseen. You say you walk and sew alone. I walk and sew alone. I don't see much of Vinnie—she's mostly dusting stairs!

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We go out very little—once in a month or two, we both get out in silks—touch at the principal points, and then put into port again. Vinnie cruises about some to transact the commerce, but coming to anchor, is most that I can do. Mr and Mrs Dwight are a delight to me, which no night can shade, and I still perform weekly journeys there, much to Austin's dudgeon, and my sister's rage.

I have heard it said “persecution kindles”—think it kindled me! They are sweet and loving, and one thing, dear Susie, always ask for you. Sunday Afternoon. I left you a long while Susie, that is, in pen and ink—my heart kept on. I was called down from you to entertain some company—went with a sorry grace, I fear, and trust I acted with one. There is a tall—pale snow storm stalking through the fields, and bowing here, at my window—shant let the fellow in!

I went to church all day in second dress, and boots. We had such precious sermons from Mr Dwight. One about unbelief, and another Esau. Sermons on unbelief ever did attract me. Thanksgiving was observed throughout the state last week! Believe we had a Turkey, and two kinds of Pie. Otherwise, no change. Father went Thanksgiving night. Austin goes tomorrow, unless kept by storm. He will see you, Darling! What I cannot do. Oh *could* I! We did not attend the Thanksgiving “Soiree”—owing to our sadness at just parting with father. Your sister will give particulars. Abby is much better—rode horseback every day until the snow came, and goes down street now just like other girls—Abby seems more gentle, more affectionate, than she has.

Eme Kellogg wonders she does not hear from you. I gave your message to her, and bring you back the same. Eme is still with Henry, tho' no outward bond has as yet encircled them. Edward Hitchcock and baby, and Mary, spent Thanksgiving here. I called upon Mary—she appears very sweetly, and the baby is quite becoming to her. They all adore the baby. Mary inquired for you with a good deal of warmth, and wanted to send her love when I wrote. Susie—had that been you—well—well! I must stop, Sister. Things *have* wagged, dear Susie, and they're wagging still. “Little Children, love one another.” Not all of life to live, is it, nor all of death to die.

Susie—we all love you—Mother—Vinnie—me. *Dearly!* Your Sister Harriet is our most intimate friend. The last night of the term, John sent his love to you. I have not heard from Mat for months.

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"They say that absence conquers." It has vanquished me. Mother and Vinnie send their love. Austin must carry his.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 9). Ink. Dated: Monday Evening.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 211-213, in part.

The letter, begun on Monday, November 27, was concluded on the following Sunday. Austin and Susan were expecting to be married in the autumn of 1855. For some time Austin had been planning a trip to Chicago, to size up his prospects for establishing a good law practice there. He left Amherst on December 4, and returned early in January, after a visit to the Gilberts in Grand Haven, Michigan. Edward Dickinson returned to Washington on November 30 for the second session of the Thirty-third Congress, which convened about December first.

The conclusion of the next to the last paragraph is a paraphrase of the two lines concluding the second stanza of James Montgomery's hymn, beginning: "O where shall rest be found:"

The world can never give  
The bliss for which we sigh;  
'Tis not the *whole* of life to live;  
Nor *all* of death to die.